12 HUGE REVIEWS Homeworld: Cataclysm · Sanity
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10 PREVIEWS INCLUDING
Q3 TEAM ARENA
MYST 3: EXILE

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The [illegible]ld's Selli[illegible]C Games [illegible]zine

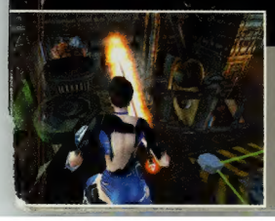


L-R: AMERICAN MCGEE: ALICE
STEVIE CASE: DAIKATANA
ALEX GARDEN: SIGMA
CLIFF BLESZINSKI:
UNREAL TOURNAMENT

MEET THE NEXT GAME GODS

LISTEN IN AS 10 SMART YOUNG GAME CREATORS DISCUSS THEIR GAMES, THE INDUSTRY, AND YOU

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VOL. 7 NO. 11 ▪ NOVEMBER 2000



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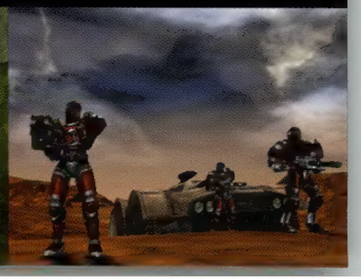
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PC GAMER
VOLUME 7 · NUMBER 11 · NOVEMBER 2000



Cover Story

MEET THE NEXT GAME GODS

68 These are the new pioneers of the gaming world. They are gamers, and they've got great things to say about this industry. Their credits include *Unreal Tournament, Homeworld, System Shock 2,* and *Daikatana. PC Gamer* brought them together in one room to talk about the thing that gets them up in the morning: gaming. Where are we now? Where are we going? And where will they take us? All these questions, and more, are answered by this eclectic mix of voices and talents.

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www.DailyRadar.com



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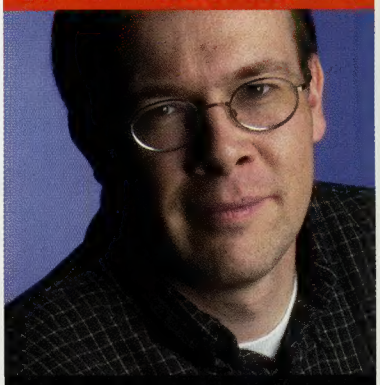
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LETTER FROM THE ED.



"Goddammit, when is somebody going to go on the record in this story?!"

Over a year ago, *PC Gamer* assembled a cast of industry luminaries that became known as the "Game Gods." Fortunately for all of us, many of them are still plying that same trade (though not necessarily for the same companies as consolidation in our industry continues). Better still, there's a new crop of designers working on making their own significant splash in PC gaming. We managed to get eight of them together to discuss the games they make, the trials and tribulations of that process, and the people that they make them for — you, the fans. It's an absolutely fascinating insight into the thoughts of these bright young things.

This month, it's also great to see us having a dilemma over awarding a Game of the Month stamp. As the holiday season approaches, so arrives many sought-after games, and it's great to see such quality in so many. From *AOEII: The Conquerors*, to *Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K.2*, *Homeworld: Cataclysm* to *Grand Prix 3*, there's great offerings for every taste. Here's hoping that some of the remaining big holiday titles (*Tribes 2*, *C&C: Red Alert 2*, among others) show similar dedication to quality.

Due to the flood of entries, the movie quote contest (that line at the top of this column) is a little trickier this month. There may be an extra special prize for the right answer! Congratulations for last month's contest go to George Culbertson who spotted the reference from the brilliant *Stripes*.

So, as always, enjoy the issue, and be sure to let me know what your thoughts by sending your contest entries and comments to *ednote@pcgamer.com*.

Rob Smith

Rob Smith,
Editor-in-Chief

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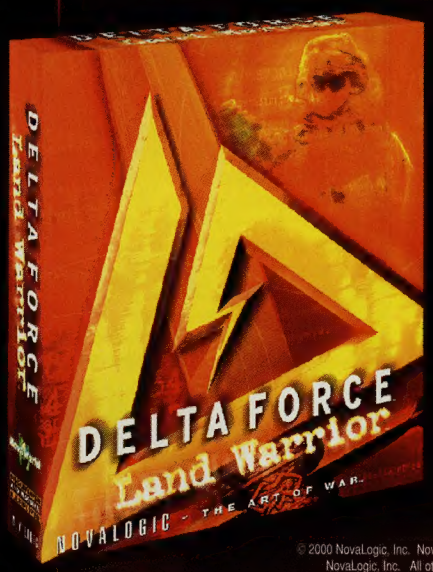
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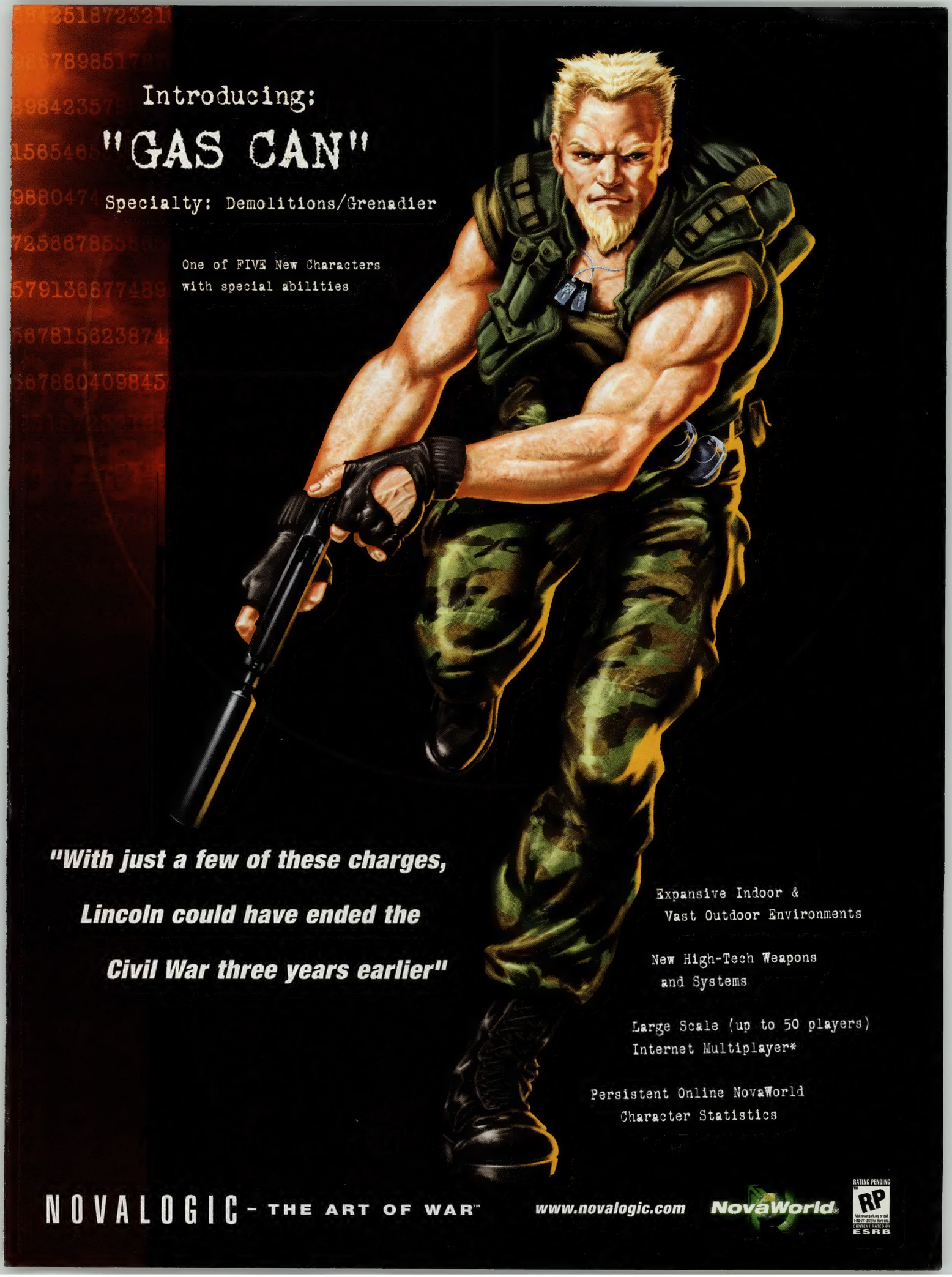






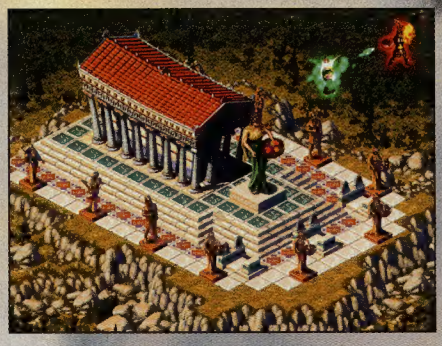
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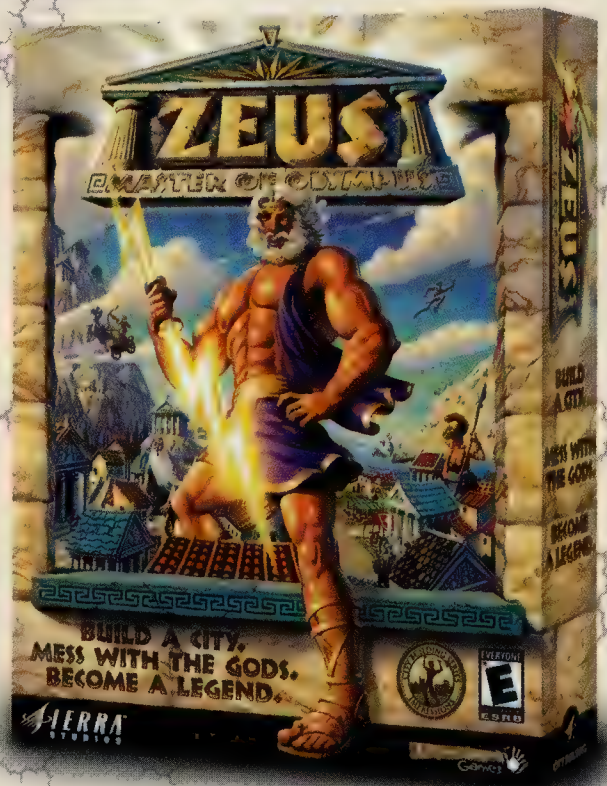
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AN INTERFACE IS (RE)BORN

PC GAMER RECODES INTERFACE FOR THE CD; WORLD SHOCKED

All right, we admit it. Our last interface had a few problems. No, it had more bugs than Volkswagen. We even came to believe it was the first computer program to actually go senile, as it remarkably seemed to grow buggier with age. It simply had to go. Nothing brings us more pleasure than to announce to you, our dedicated reader, that those pesky error-infested days are history.

You're invited to check out a newly released, completely reprogrammed interface on this month's CD and report your experience. Our tests show that it's about 20 times faster, a thousand times more reliable, and far less resource-heavy. We hope you experience the same results. Drop our disc editor a line at *jeremy@pcgamer.com* and tell us what you think. We're anxious to hear about it.

When you're ready to install the displayed demo, click this button to launch the setup program. It might help to close the interface at this time.



Unfortunately, we can't provide technical support for the games contained on the disc. However, if the disc itself is scratched or defective, you can order a replacement from *http://support.imaginemedia.com*.

GOODIES FOLDER

Check out the goodies folder on the disc for exclusive *Tribes* fiction, a 3D game maker, and these two exclusive Talents for *Sanity*:



The Binary Grid Glyph psionically binds the Binary Grid Talent onto a surface in the form of an invisible symbol that will trigger the Talent if anything should come in contact with it.



Use the Tortured Soul Talent (known as the "Gary Whitta Talent" in the office) to hurl a tormented spirit from the afterworld. It travels along a straight path and will inflict sanity damage on any living thing it comes in contact with.



Julie removing her sword: a prelude to devastation.

HEAVY METAL: F.A.K.K.2

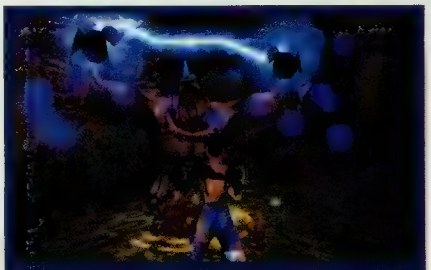
http://fakk2.godgames.com • Gathering of Developers
Pentium 233, 32MB RAM, 3D accelerator card

When you look at this title you may think to yourself, "Cool, they spun a game off of that old 1981 R-rated cartoon." Or, you might say, "Jeepers, they made a game out of the comic book series." If you're really sharp, you'll note, "Oh, it's a counterpart to that really crappy movie that came out last July." In which case, you might declare, "I don't give a damn."

But don't jump to conclusions. Although it is all these things, it's also a terrific game in its own right, crafted by the artists at Ritual Entertainment, the same outfit who brought us *Sin* two years ago. It's also powered by the *Quake III* engine, which should be reason enough to install. Truthfully, the engine has never looked so good. Environments are brought to life with juicy textures, exceptional animations, and loads of in-game cinematic cut-scenes.

When configuring your controls you'll notice spots for both left and right-handed attacks. The Ritual team is pretty proud of this, and it will become clearer later in training. However, it may require you to make a few adjustments to your standard key placement. Just experiment a little and find something you're comfortable with, keeping in mind that both attacks should be equally accessible.

Once in the game, explore the grounds; no danger lurks yet. Towards the back of the village, a woman with blond hair awaits you. After a little Xena-esque dialogue, she'll invite you inside to her training facilities. After working up a sweat, you'll be taken outside and, in the interest of keeping the demo size low, you'll be transported to a later part of the game wherein the world is being attacked by alien beasties. Get it done.



This monster just lost its child, and it's not too happy about it. Guess you'll have to kill it.

www.DailyRadar.com



AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE CONQUERORS

www.microsoft.com/games • Microsoft
Pentium 166, 32MB RAM

Age of Empires II: The Age of Kings is regarded by many as the best RTS of all time. An expansion pack was inevitable.

Enter *The Conquerors*. It adds all-new landscapes, units, technologies and campaigns with all the detail of the first game. The graphics, especially, are extremely sharp at high resolutions and the voices clearly reflect the varying native languages.

This demo contains one King of the Hill multiplayer map set on a Yucatan map, a full single-player scenario, and the Mayan and Aztec civilizations.

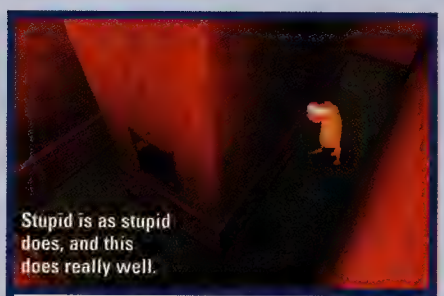


TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

www.activision.com • Activision
Pentium 200, 32MB RAM, 3D accelerator card

This game is awesome. It's dope. The bomb, even. Anyone who's followed the console scene knows *Tony Hawk* has topped the charts for months, and the sequel is now coming to our almighty PC.

The game's pace is masterfully designed. You'll endeavor to complete a series of tricks without stopping (or wiping out) in between. The more tricks you complete, the more speed you'll gain, and once you're in a zone, new extreme tricks are unlocked. Get to this point, and Tony can pull 900s until the cows come home. Moo.

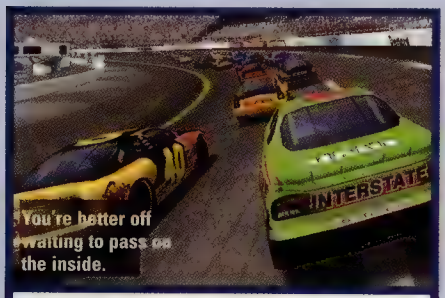


STUPID INVADERS

www.stupidinvaders.com • UbiSoft
Pentium 200, 32MB RAM, 3D accelerator card

Adventure gamers, don't say we never did anything for you. Here is a 100MB demo just for you, a story of five hapless aliens who have innocently crash-landed on planet Earth, only to be pursued by the evil Doctor Sakarine, hobbyist alien collector. Only you can save them!

Playing this game is not unlike interacting with a high-resolution cartoon. Funky, skewed camera angles abound, and the colors are lush and saturated. In order to escape Sakarine, you'll have to delve deep into the mind of the madman and find solutions to several devious puzzles.

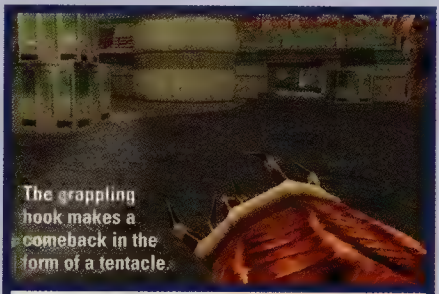


NASCAR HEAT

www.hasbro-interactive.com • Hasbro Interactive
Pentium 233, 32MB RAM, 3D accelerator card

There are two types of gamers: those that like simulations, and those that don't. Hasbro believes they have invented a driving game that appeals to both.

It's developed by Monster Games, Inc., the same company who brought us the highly-lauded *Viper Racing*. You can't go careening off course and jump over roofs and plow through parked trailers, but boundaries can be a good thing. Casual gamers will enjoy AI and physics tweaked for an arcade feel, while more seasoned racers will enjoy the more realistic expert mode.



HALF-LIFE: OPPOSING FORCE CTF

www.sierrastudios.com • Sierra
Pentium 200, 32MB RAM

Until now, you needed *Half-Life, Opposing Force*, the CTF upgrade, and all the necessary patches to play this CTF variant. Not any more. This awesome Capture the Flag mode is now available in a stand-alone version, and we're bringing it to you. Included in our pack are two exclusive maps that you won't find anywhere else.

The game takes place between the Black Mesa and Opposing Force teams, who snipe and blast their way to their opponent's base and back. Play online, or better yet on a LAN, and show your friends how it's done.



SYDNEY 2000

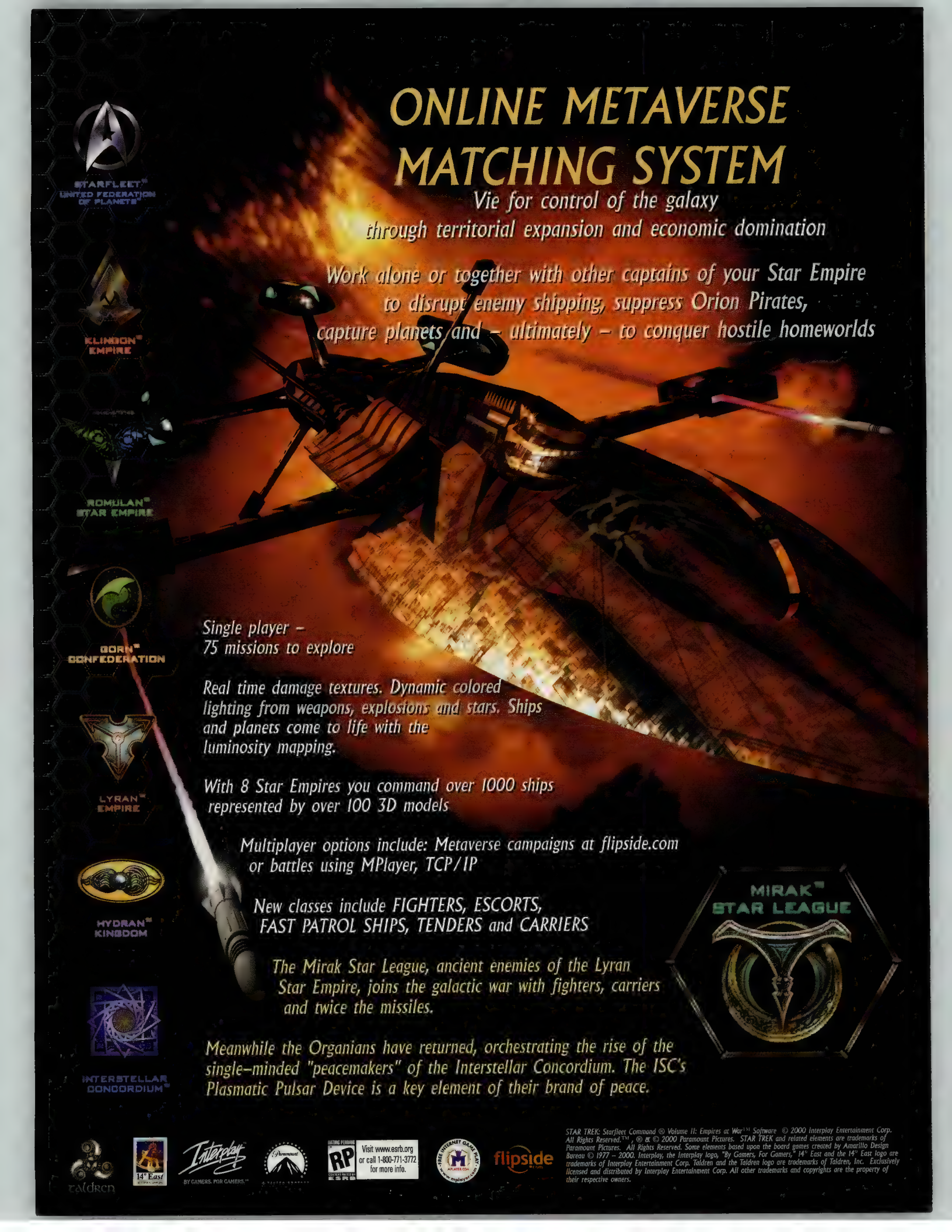
www.olympicvideogames.com • Eidos Interactive
Pentium 266, 64MB RAM, 3D accelerator cars

If you remember the arcade classic *Hyper Sports*, or even the PC gaming equivalent *Summer Games*, you'll be happy to learn that the old-school design has received a graphical facelift from Eidos in anticipation of this year's Olympics events.

The animation is superb, modeled using motion capture, and the human bodies are filled with meaty polygons. The full game offers 12 events in which to compete, and this demo will let you try your legs on the 110 Meter Hurdles. As with all the events, use *LEFT ARROW*, *RIGHT ARROW*, and *ENTER* to bring it home.

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The Mirak Star League, ancient enemies of the Lyran Star Empire, joins the galactic war with fighters, carriers and twice the missiles.

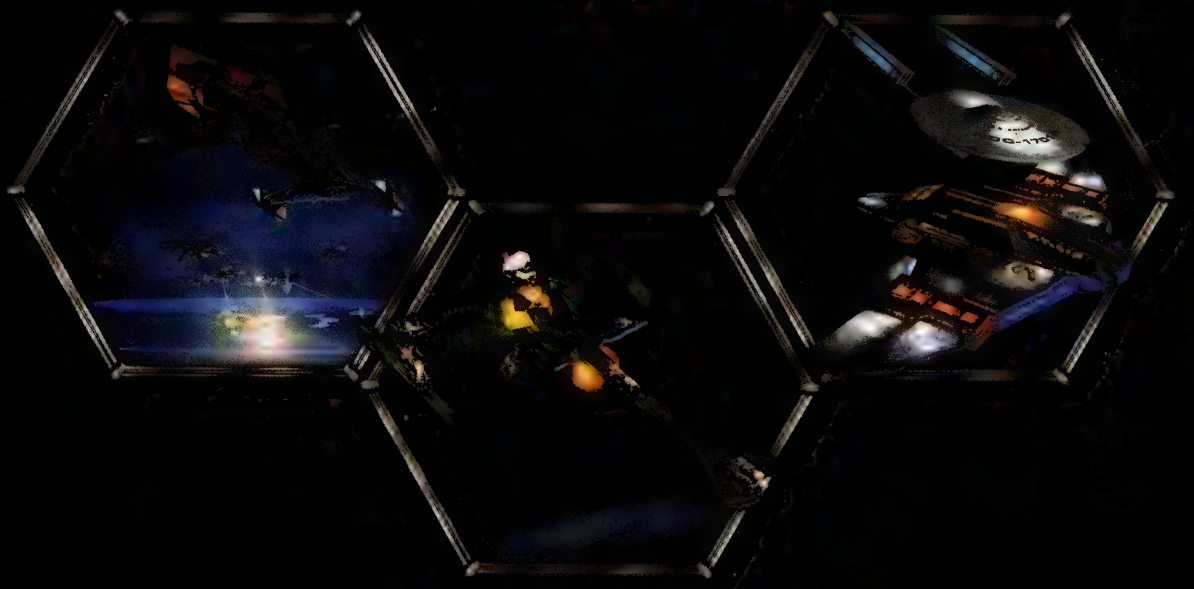
Meanwhile the Organians have returned, orchestrating the rise of the single–minded "peacemakers" of the Interstellar Concordium. The ISC's Plasmatic Pulsar Device is a key element of their brand of peace.

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STARTOPIA



This is your dungeon heart, guard it well — oops, wrong game. This is actually your energy collector; it reflects how many units of energy you have saved up.

It's like *Dungeon Keeper 2* on steroids, in space, and with aliens

Every game aims to have its own genre-bending prime feature. *Halo* promises mind-blowing graphics, *Max Payne* is expected to deliver cool cinematic gameplay, and *Black & White* is set to impress with its innovative interface, but *Startopia* is shooting for plain old fun. Don't think that it won't look great, and don't think that it won't be innovative or cool; it'll be those, too. Brought to you by Mucky Foot, a development company that includes several ex-*Dungeon Keeper 2* guys, *Startopia* takes all the humor, strategy gameplay, and great looks of the award-winning Bullfrog hit and throws it into the vast melting pot of outer space.

> "Overall, I think the most unique feature about *Startopia* is that it is a 'god sim' with a game in it."
> — *Gary Carr, Lead Designer*

As the story goes, a huge war has ravaged much of the galaxy, and hordes of alien refugees are fleeing their devastated homes. Being a savvy business entrepreneur, you set up shop in a huge space station along with three other like-minded alien capitalists. The purpose of the space station is to provide a "halfway home" in space for the dispossessed. Your eventual goal is to edge out the competition and take over the entire station for yourself.

Thirty-five different alien species will inhabit your Startopia, but you only really need to concern yourself with nine of them. They'll range from the typical, gray-skinned, bug-eyed critters that fascinate Fox Mulder on a weekly basis, to two-headed, green-skinned nerd-aliens, and hot nymph-aliens with butterfly wings (who are probably trying to get to meet Fox Mulder). Each species has its own racial likes and dislikes along with unique attributes for your entrepreneurial skills to manipulate. For example, the Turakken (some two-headed guys) have a penchant for engineering and research, and you'll want to use them to head up your scientific endeavors. However, for every positive attribute, there's a negative one. Certain races won't get along with others, and this could lead to some serious problems.

Of course, to build up your station, you'll need some serious funding, and energy is the primo commodity. Tenants of your space station will pay you in

F.Y.I.

CATEGORY: Strategy

DEVELOPER: Mucky Foot

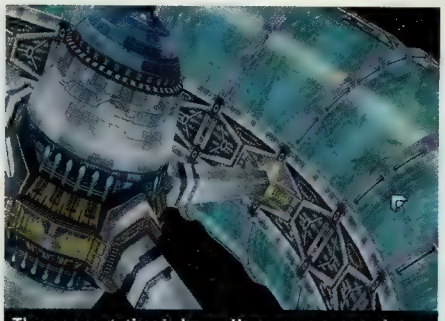
PUBLISHER: Eidos Interactive

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 70%

RELEASE DATE: November

IN A NUTSHELL: A full-on, honest-to-god, space station game. You're in control of a massive space-bound oasis that will potentially be home to nine different alien races. Build casinos, bars, and hotels. Cater to dozens of different alien species, and crush your competition to become the sole owner and proprietor of a massive space station.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: It's a god game with an actual goal, storyline, and ending. Mucky Foot's band of ex-*Dungeon Keeper 2* developers knows what they are doing when it comes to this genre. Goals will be presented as episodes, with each one being more challenging than the last. Expect to see the same brand of humor that made *Dungeon Keeper 2* so appealing.



The space station is huge. Here you can see the Bio Deck through the windows.



Expect to see some wild alien creature designs, along with more typical ones.

energy, and energy is expended in everything that you do from research to building. The absolute last thing you want to do is run out of...well...energy. To maintain power, you're going to have to earn yourself alien patrons.

Gary Carr, Lead Designer for *Startopia*, says these patrons can be a finicky bunch. "The character interaction is way beyond anything else I've seen before," he says. The peaceful Dahenese Sirens prefer to spend their time giving and receiving love and pleasure. While this may sound harmless (and puts them at the head of any party invite list), the staunchly religious Zedem Monks frown upon their ways. The Sirens, always up for a challenge, will try and seduce the monks if there's nothing better for them to do. This will result in a growing cult of corrupt Monks in the midst of your space station. If left untended, the cult will end up converting other aliens, causing them to be whisked away by their "god," leaving you short several important energy-providing members. This can further hinder you because throughout the game you'll have to find specific aliens to hire as staff members. You'll assign various jobs like security, research, and even leading away teams to distant planets. Losing these staff members to alien hotties can be a major setback.

The station itself is a grand vision to behold. Divided in to three levels, the topmost is called the Bio-deck, encompassing an artificial environment that you can adjust in any way you wish. You can sculpt the landscape, adjust the climate, and basically make it livable for specific species of aliens. As in *Dungeon Keeper 2*, if you build it, they will come. The Bio-deck can be divided into different sections so that you can have varied environments to support multiple races. "The point of the Bio Deck initially is to attract the passing alien life forms to settle on your station. If you can recreate a little 'oasis' of their home world, they may stay for a while," says Carr.



These Zedem Monks will try to make everyone aboard your station walk the straight and narrow.

The Central Deck is the main residential and commercial area. Here you'll build shops, bars, living quarters, and more. The number of different buildings you can make is incredible, covering everything from the Punch-o-Matic Combat Arena to the Exoticarium, featuring the finest in funky adult alien entertainment. Each building can affect the attitude of the populace in your station. Build too many Exoticariums and Casinos, and you'll see trouble brewing (but plenty of fun). However, build too many Zedem Star Temples, and you risk having a station full of nothing but monks. The key is to find that perfect balance that will make everyone happy.

The last level is the Lower Deck. This is basically the mechanical heart of your station. All the industrial and technical buildings are located here, as are the docking bays where visitors and cargo are dropped off. Monitoring and controlling events on all three levels can be a complicated job, but no one said running a space station was going to be easy.

The most original, enticing aspect to *Startopia* is not the funky alien races, the fantastical technology, or the gorgeous graphics. It's the fact that the game has a specific direction set in a realized world. Carr put it best, saying, "overall, I think the most unique feature about *Startopia* is that it is a 'god sim' with a game in it." Rather than just dumping you into a space station and letting you run amok with no purpose, *Startopia* provides specific goals and brings them to you in episodic chunks. Some are simple, such as building a station that is capable of housing a certain number of aliens, while others involve removing the presence of other station developers and fighting off space pirates and alien parasites. There's even one mission that the developers have said is modeled after the movie *Aliens* and will have you hiring a group of space marines to clean out an alien infestation. It could inject the traditional meaning to that old phrase, "Game over, man!"

—Li C. Kuo

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR TENANTS

Knowing the general state of your tenants is important. That's why *Startopia* lets you chat with the aliens in your station and find out how content they are. Of course, sometimes this isn't as easy as it sounds. The two-headed Turakkens will sometimes disagree with each other, with one head nodding yes and the other shaking its head no.



Those crazy Turakkens can't even agree with their own heads.



MECHWARRIOR 4 VENGEANCE

Each of the game's twenty main Mechs are constructed of up to a thousand polygons, resulting in seriously impressive visuals.

Microsoft picks up the mantle of the proud MechWarrior series — and look what they have in store

That MechWarrior license sure gets around, don't it? After Activision's *MechWarrior, MechWarrior 2,* and *Mercenaries* hit the shelves, the lucrative giant-robot license found itself tromping over to the boys at MicroProse for *MechWarrior 3* — and it was all good. Nevertheless, MechWarrior fired its jump jets once again, and landed smack-dab in the middle of Microsoft territory. But fear not, the license is in good hands: the majority of the thirty-man *Vengeance* team has been working on the Virtual World BattleTech cockpits for the past five years, and PC gamers are in for one helluva ride.

As its name implies, *Vengeance* is an epic tale of death, revenge, and payback, featuring a wide cast of wingmen, over twenty Mechs, and an intensive single-player campaign mode. As the story goes, you've returned home from a victory in the Clan Wars, only to find your family wiped out and your planet occupied by an opposing House. Obviously, this makes you very, very angry, and somebody is going to pay. Fortunately, this time around, your character isn't some schlep who's forced to make his way into the upper echelon of Mech pilots — you're large and in charge, giving out orders and planning tactics. *Vengeance* puts a large emphasis on leadership skills, and the storyline unfolds through your wingmen, or Lancemates.

Each Lancemate has his or her own distinctive personality, and exhibits certain strengths or weaknesses on the battlefield. A large portion of the game's narrative relies on professionally shot full-motion video sequences, a throwback to the good ol' days of *Wing Commander III.* Around two dozen actors were filmed on green-screen sets for the game's numerous cutscenes, and you'll get to interact with each of them during the course of the game. You'll also need to keep them from getting killed during battle by dishing out orders via the comm menu.

Thanks to the development team's experience in creating full-sized BattleTech simulators, one of the biggest draws for *Vengeance* should be the game's intensive multiplayer support. "We've been playing networked BattleTech games for ten years," says Producer TJ Wagner. "We've designed a ton of multiplayer games, and we're currently playtesting them to see which ones are the most fun." You'll be able to play Capture the Flag, King of the Hill, Destruction (which leverages kills against deaths), Attrition (a point-based battle), and standard team-based battles. Expect options aplenty, too — players running game servers will be able to tweak heat settings, friendly fire, return rates, tonnage, weather, and more. Server operators can also run their own scripts for highly customized games and tournaments.

F.Y.I.

CATEGORY: Simulation

DEVELOPER: Microsoft

PUBLISHER: Microsoft

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 90%

RELEASE DATE: 4th Quarter

IN A NUTSHELL: It's just you and your Lancemates against the rest of the world in the latest interactive installment of FASA's heavy-metal property.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: A comprehensive campaign mode, a major emphasis on multiplayer, gorgeous graphics, and more than enough tweakability to keep the die-hards playing for many moons.



Your Mechs may be quick on their feet, but try to avoid stumbling down a cliff side like this klutzy warrior.



Customizing your personal Mech is easy and fun — you will have the ability to make your own insignias and skins.

Mech abilities are being evened-out, so the majority of the Mechs in your garage should stand on equal ground. "You'll see a real improvement in game balance between the different Mechs," says Wagner. "Each Mech was designed with a specific purpose in mind, so no longer will the three heaviest Mechs rule the battlefield."

The team is also taking precautions to ensure that cheaters will get the boot, as a number of players were able to bend the rules in the previous two MechWarrior games. "The multiplayer uses a client-server architecture, with the server doing all of the rules checking," says Wagner. "Mechs will be checked to see if they're legal — before they're even let into the game. Log files and stat recording will alert the server if anything doesn't look right." So let that be a warning to you, you naughty boys.

As for your own fact checking needs, Microsoft has successfully integrated NetGames USA statistics tracking, the same used in *Unreal Tournament*. Says Wagner, "We will for sure be tracking kills versus deaths, point scoring based on damage, and scoring for the different multiplayer game types." And getting online and blasting away shouldn't be a problem, as *Vengeance* will include a handy-dandy in-game browser, and an Internet connection wizard.

> "For the people who live only to play against other human beings, we're including more multiplayer game modes and options than all the previous Mech games combined."
>
> *— TJ Wagner, Producer*

As far as online games are concerned, half the fun is in player customization — and *MechWarrior 4* will give you the ability to tweak your physical appearance in order to create the ultimate walking death machine. Custom skins are supported, and there are hundreds of possible weapon and armor configurations for personalizing enough to create the ultimate visual impact.

All of this MechWarrior love is wrapped up with sweet-looking visuals that are nothing short of jaw dropping. "We have particle-based weapon effects, thousand-polygon Mechs, weather effects, densely populated worlds, and the most realistic animations you've ever seen on a 40-foot-tall walking tank," says Wagner. And all that new scenery isn't just there for looks, either: "Trees and terrain will block line of sight and offer both advantages and disadvantages for different Mechs," says Wagner. "The city levels are like a huge game of hide-and-seek." You'll need a semi-beefy system to keep up, though — the target system is a PII with an 8MB graphics card and 64MB RAM.

And if you're new to the BattleTech universe, *Vengeance* shouldn't beat you over the head too much. "First time players will find the game to be easily accessible and a lot of fun," says Wagner, "and for the experienced MechWarrior, we've put all the simulation options in a simple menu screen where they can tweak to their heart's content."

Will *Vengeance* have the universal appeal that Microsoft is gunning for? Wagner reckons so. "Every gamer plays Mech games for a different reason," he says. "People looking for a fantastic-looking game, where the Mechs look and move realistically, will be blown away. For some, it's all about the campaign, and we're bringing the BattleTech novels to life. And for the people who live only to play against other human beings, we're including more multiplayer game modes and options than all the previous Mech games combined."

Best of all, *Vengeance*, is firmly on track for a holiday release. "We are code and content-complete, and we're deep in game testing and play-balancing," says Wagner. "It's going to be a MechWarrior holiday season for sure!"

— Colin Williamson



Attach some jump jets for the obligatory sky surfing so you Mech can catch some air.



Mech 4 will feature a variety of cool-looking landscapes, from barren deserts to complex cityscapes.



In-game and cutscene animations are smooth — the Mechs look and move more convincingly than ever.

Conquest: Frontier Wars

Digital Anvil continues to colonize space games with an epic conquest

Recently, PCs have been under siege by an armada of 3D real-time strategy games. *Ground Control, Shogun, Earth 2150,* and *Dark Reign 2* have done a respectable job of shepherding the RTS into a 3D world, but none of them emerged as the champion. Backed by creative input from *Wing Commander* veteran, Chris Roberts, Digital Anvil is taking a bold stab at being the oil on this difficult sea.

If it does move to the front of the 3D lines, it will be rather ironic, because *Conquest* is actually a 2D game built on a 3D engine. All movements take place on a 2D plane, and the X-axis is discarded in favor of a more elegant design. When it was originally announced in 1998 as one of the first titles from Roberts' new studio, the goal was to make it a fully 3D tactical space combat game. Since then, *Conquest* has undergone some rethinking and has emerged with an emphasis on tactics and strategy rather than pretty polygons.

Although it is set in space, *Conquest*'s inspiration is more earthbound. The destruction of supply lines was crucial to the Allies in more than one battle during WWII, and Roberts realizes this is an important tactic that is too often missing from strategy games. "Supply lines are a major part of modern warfare," he says, "and we wanted to bring this key element into the RTS genre. In order to build units, you need resources, and resource gathering units; one strategy is to knockout a player's supply lines, thus choking them and making them a much weaker opponent. The player needs to be aware of his economy and manage it as much as his units."

Complicating matters even further, *Conquest*'s battles take place not just on a single map, but in up to 16 different star systems connected by wormholes. Those wormholes soon become vital arteries between systems and combat hot spots. Roberts says, "These are the gates into your backyard, and they are an important focal point for offensive and defensive combat tactics. If a system is 'in supply,' all the platforms will work well. However, if the supply line is destroyed, then it powers down and is far less effective."



Controlling wormholes, the portals to your enemies backyard, will be vital to success.



Although you can freely rotate and zoom the map, and the crafts are 3D, the game will be played on a 2D plane.

We can imagine some colossal battles for the control of a few key wormholes, which could be daunting if we also have to micromanage our supply lines. That's why *Conquest* will also feature unique "Fleet Admirals," special AI designed to use intelligent tactics to control individual units. You can then have battles across several fronts and feel confident that your unwatched troops will operate intelligently, using the right tactics and special weapons for the job. Even more important, the AI Admirals won't fly foolishly into another player's trap.

And the fiendishness of the traps will depend on what race you're playing. There will be three different species in Conquest, each with its own abilities and technology. The Terrans are a balanced, human-like race with cruisers, troopships, and massive dreadnoughts at their disposal (sound familiar, anyone?). The Mantis are insect-like creatures who use swarm tactics to overpower their enemies by sheer numbers (really familiar?). And finally, the Calareons are an energy-based race who use particle beams and cloaking devices to get in close to their opponents (really, really familiar?).

The single-player version will feature 16 missions and two tutorials, and you start out as the Terrans. "During the campaign," Roberts says, "the opportunity to play all three races will present itself. The cool thing is, the player will decide how he or she progresses." You will also decide just how cool *Conquest* is when it ships later this year. But judging by the fresh thinking and Roberts' track record, you shouldn't be disappointed.

— Jim Preston

F.Y.I.

CATEGORY: Real-time Strategy

DEVELOPER: Digital Anvil

PUBLISHER: Microsoft

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 80%

RELEASE DATE: Q4 2000

IN A NUTSHELL: Outer space 3D RTS set on a easy-to-navigate 2D plane.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: Designed by Digital Anvil, led by Chris Roberts of *Wing Commander* fame.

www.DailyRadar.com

THE X-PLANE GUIDE TO: AERO DYNAMICS

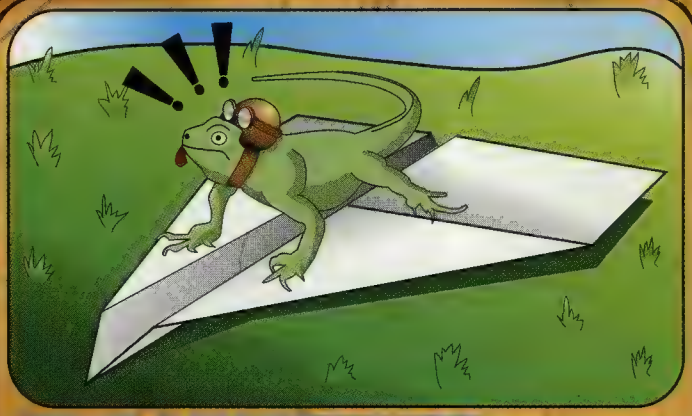


Fig. A: The bane of many a high school teacher, the paper airplane reigns supreme in terms of aerodynamic aptitude.

SIMPLE AERODYNAMICS are best explained through the use of such classic objects as the paper airplane (fig. A). Even in today's high tech flight sim market, only X-Plane can accurately depict this marvel of physics.

X-PLANE'S flawless aerodynamics model is the perfect constant to test the theory, "Can I launch a paper airplane 500 ft. from my office window."





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Plane Maker Utility

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NOTE THAT WHILE sophisticated in it's own right, the lizard's natural interface is far surpassed by that of X-Plane, which sports ultra-realistic navigation and instrumentation.



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Battle your way through Eastern Europe in pursuit of a homicidal ex-Russian Colonel bent on turning Europe into a radioactive wasteland. An adrenaline pumping plot keeps you riveted as you go behind enemy lines to save the world from nuclear terror!

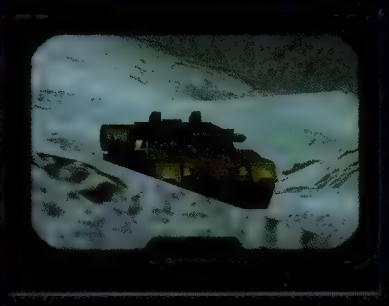
FEATURES:

- *Use your skills in thievery, computer hacking, sabotage, and reconnaissance to finish your mission objectives.*
- *Match wits against enemy AI that intelligently reacts to your every action with actual military tactics.*
- *Call in for Napalm strikes via your revolutionary map/communication PDA.*
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EverQuest: Scars of Velious

...Must...Stop...Playing...Must...See...Daylight...Can't...Stop...

Hello, my name is Rob Smith, and I'm an *EverQuest* addict. (Pause for applause and nods of support and understanding from those that really know what that means). Thank you. As a former staffer of *PC Accelerator*, I refuse to comment on rumors regarding my relationship with class A drugs, but let me just say that I envisage the cold turkey shivers to be somewhat similar to my own self-inflicted parting from *EverQuest* servers. But unlike class A drugs, *EverQuest* is not illegal, yet, and I fear that I have once more succumbed to the pangs...the cravings... just...one...more...kill.

I'd also like to use this very public forum to state that Jeff Butler is a bastard. Mr. Butler is the producer of the second *EverQuest* expansion, *Scars of Velious*. Him being producer, me being journalist, it was his task to walk me through the 16 snowy zones opened by this high level add-on. Him being a peddler of addictive gaming, me being a weak-minded *EQ* junkie, his offer of a better character than I had time to develop, waiting patiently on the test server, was too good to pass up. Again, I began wondering just why this game hadn't won a myriad of awards. Bloody hell, this is one of the best games ever conceived, and it's improving on a regular basis.

Okay, I should clarify: Mr. Butler is not really a bastard In fact, he's a really nice guy, but he's a hardcore *EverQuest* gamer, and it's infectious.

Similarly, any hardcore *EQ* player is going to have to buy *Scars of Velious*. However, it's *only* for the hardcore. If you're an occasional adventurer, the base *EQ* and *Kunark* expansion will keep you suitably entertained. *Velious'* 16 new zones are not for the weekend warrior, requiring you to be about 35th level (and have buddies) before getting involved in a storyline of warring giants and dragons. These new locations are absolutely deadly, especially to the frivolous hack and slasher. Kill the wrong creature in Rollus Zek's arena, and you'll call down the deity's avatar that'll whup anyone's polygonal butt. That means anyone. Since death will be a frequent visitor, there will be a quest that coughs up a bone that lets you teleport back to your death point (thus eliminating a tedious and dangerous journey through the linear zone structure).



The giants of *Velious* truly are enormous. And the new texture detail in the armor is amazing.



The icy wastes are home to the snow tiger — hope the "ball of yarn" lore item is nearby.

High levelers will be delighted to see some 30 new unique creatures models and highly detailed textures (etched by enthusiastic newcomers to the company, while many of the veterans are off working on the non-secret *EQ2* project). That's not to mention the new high-end leather, chain, and plate armor textures that cover every race and class (that's 156 new textures in total). Between the Wendigo (an intelligent werewolf) and gargantuan storm giants (standing over 40 feet tall), the new creatures look incredible and benefit from improvements to the animation engine that smoothes out many details, and allows for a variety of ambient twitches and sniffs from this incredible menagerie.

Sure, this add-on is designed for hardcore interest only, but being a hardcore *EQ* player is no disgrace. It only means that you've succumbed to one of the best conceived and most addictive PC games ever to come into existence. It hasn't received the true critical kudos that it should, but don't waver about jumping on this bandwagon — it's still going places.

— Rob Smith

F.Y.I.

CATEGORY: Online Roleplaying

DEVELOPER: Verant Interactive

PUBLISHER: Sony Online Entertainment

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 80%

RELEASE DATE: December 2000

IN A NUTSHELL: High-powered, high-level *EQ* expansion for the hardcore crowd.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: It continues to add content to the core *EQ* format, this time providing the power-users with a whole new playground. Populated by giants and dragons, *Velious* will be tough for all but the most organized high-level parties.

Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee

Hel-lo! Are you ready for the first fully 3D Oddworld sequel?

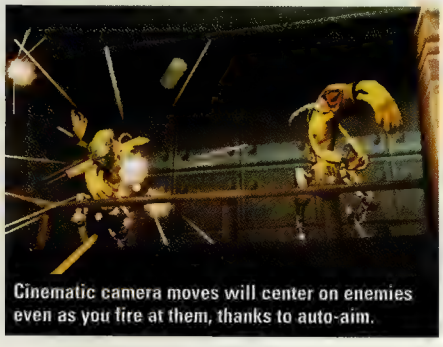
At first glance, a hardcore PC gamer such as yourself might suspect *Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee* to be just a little bit beneath his radar. After all, it is a platform-style adventure game about little cute yelping creatures. But if you dismissed this game right off hand, you'd be missing out on some good fun, and definitely missing some of the best graphics seen on the PC.

Most of the buzz around *Munch's Oddysee* has centered around the PlayStation 2 version of the game, but it's also in simultaneous co-development for the PC. The 3D world of *Munch's Oddysee* is a playground for the retina. After you get a few eyefuls of the new and improved *Oddworld*, you might just swear off FPS environments for a while.

The game picks up the saga of *Abe's Oddysee* and *Abe's Exoddus*, in which the weird-looking Abe saved his species by leading them out of the clutches of an evil sorcerer who was harvesting them for their tears. This time around, it's a different species of Oddworld inhabitant that faces extinction: the one-legged, aquatic Gabbits. An epidemic of "webs" has been reducing their numbers; we can glean from the brilliant cinematics that the webs are fishing nets belonging to humanoid fisherman, and the Gabbits are being hunted to extinction. Finally, one sole Gabbit remains, the adorably plucky Munch. It's a safe bet that he's going to have to bring his kind back from the brink.

Munch begins the game in the clutches of a nefarious pharmaceuticals company, and has to figure out the way to freedom. His compatriot in this quest is the irrepressible Abe, the Mudokon hero of the first two games. You play as either Munch or Abe through various stages of the game.

Munch's Oddysee looks to be a smugly sarcastic satire on the current consumerism



Cinematic camera moves will center on enemies even as you fire at them, thanks to auto-aim.



A consumer rep of the Oddworld variety, slinging cans of soda from high-powered soda can launchers.

rage, and involves Abe and Munch's effort to launch a consumer-goods factory. The sequence in which they open their factory is a hilarious update on the Oddworld system of Gamespeak, in which you can command non-player characters with simple and hilarious bits of dialogue like "Hel-lo!," "Follow me," and "Work." Abe directs a posse of his faithful Mudokon brethren to fill different positions around the factory, churning huge pieces of machinery that produce the individual components of a song. Once the song is up and running, the factory will be profitable. Abe doesn't steal the show, however. Munch opens up a whole new avenue of Oddworld exploration. A fish quite literally out of water, Munch makes use of a motorized scooter to get around, since he has to hop on one foot (tail?) otherwise. But when he gets back into water, he's a whole different creature. Get ready to zip at monster speeds.

The best new feature is an innovative new camera system that seems to use predetermined spline paths to provide a cinematic roving eye that never loses the action and always provides the most dramatic vantage point. Designer Lorne Lanning says, "We paid top dollar for it, but it makes all the difference," and in demonstrating a tour of the factory, it was obvious that *Munch's Oddysee* is going to be teaching third-person game developers a thing or two about presentation. Each camera move seems to be scripted, no matter where you take the character on-screen.

If you've been missing out on this series, now's the time to get excited about the surreal and sumptuous Oddworld saga.

— Daniel Morris

F.Y.I.

CATEGORY: Adventure

DEVELOPER: Oddworld Inhabitants

PUBLISHER: Infogrames

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 70%

RELEASE DATE: Fall 2001

IN A NUTSHELL: Abe and a new buddy, the aquatic Munch, take a full 3D spin around the beloved land of Oddworld. This updated *Oddysee* will feature top-line graphics and an innovative camera system that follows the action with a cinematographer's keen eye.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: *Oddworld: Abe's Odysee* was one of the most highly-acclaimed games of recent years, and the graphics being brought to the sequel ensure that it will satisfy a whole new crop of gamers. Plus, its development team, the exciting Oddworld Inhabitants, are returning in full force to make sure the sequel is up to snuff.

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When you're online, you know how frustrating it is to get disconne

DISCONNECTED AGAIN. ENOUGH ALREADY.

There you are happily gaming online when you hear



that one little word you know so well, "Good-bye." Suddenly, you're no longer firing a laser-guided rocket at the back of your buddy's head. Instead, you're left all alone with nothing but your thoughts to keep you company. And one thought in particular keeps popping up.

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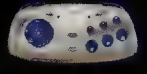


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TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Championship Surfer

Surf's up for PC gamers



Krome is trying to create the most realistic wave physics possible.

It was just a matter of time before someone brought a new surfing game to our beloved PC. With the rising popularity of snowboarding and skateboarding games, the move to surfing is both logical and predictable.

Slated for a late 2000 release, *Championship Surfer* will feature the O'Neil team surfers, including John Flourence, an eleven-year-old surfer boy who can do Kick Outs with the best of them. If playing as an eleven-year old kid is none too appealing, there are eight different surfers with their own unique styles, and a selection of different boards to ride. Ten beach locations, each with unique wave characteristics, will deliver the perilous surf conditions you crave. Developer Krome Studios even brought in scientists to ensure that the waves are as realistic as possible. Australian National Champion, Mark "Richo" Richardson helped playtest the game to ensure the physics and overall feel of the game is authentic.

Then again, all the research in the world could go ignored without decent graphics. Luckily, the developers have coded up a graphics engine that surfer and gamer dudes alike will appreciate. Waves roll and crest, mist rises from the water, and each surfer is meticulously animated.

Topping it all off are multiple play modes including Championship, King of the Waves, Rumble Mode, Freestyle, and Training. Certain modes will have commentators supplying voice-overs, and others will have you dodging buoys, swimmers, and even sharks. There is also an Arcade mode that focuses more on dodging and simple gameplay than simulating realistic waves and board behavior.

Come to think of it, we're surprised someone hasn't tried this already. Surfing through a cresting tube has a gnarly adrenaline factor, and what better tool than a PC to crunch the physics? As long as things only get better between now and its release date, *Championship Surfer* should be the best surfing experience on the PC since *California Games*.

— Li C. Kuo



You'll take on that big wave with your friends and see who survives in the multiplayer mode.

F.Y.I.

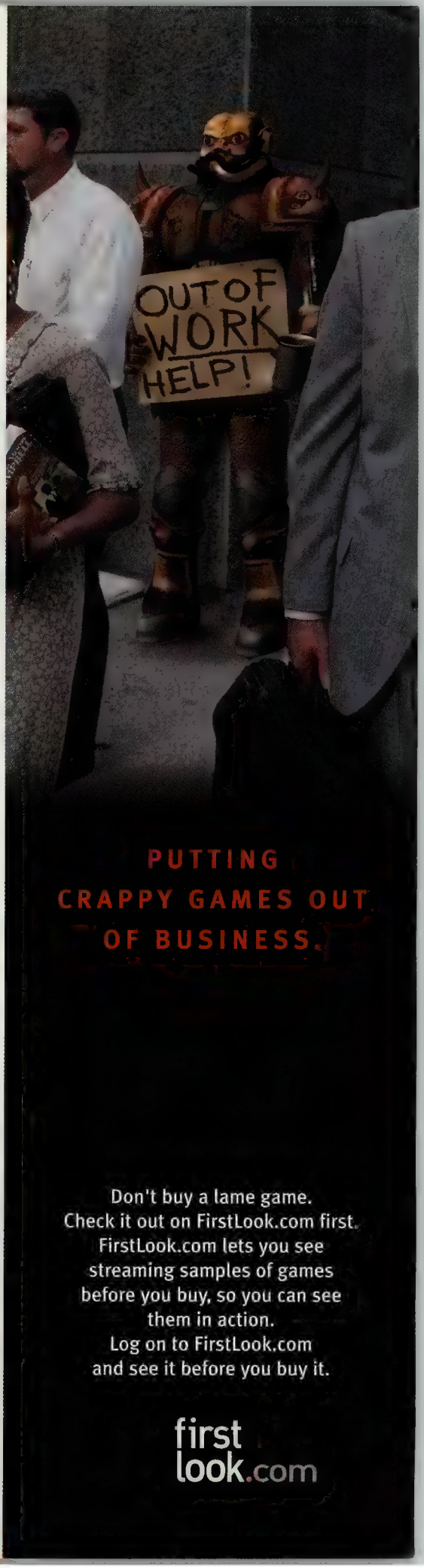
CATEGORY: Extreme Sports

DEVELOPER: Krome Studios

PUBLISHER: Mattel Interactive

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 70%

RELEASE DATE: Fall 2000





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PLAYERS

EVERYONE

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Those gorgeous pre-rendered backgrounds that made the original *Myst* stand out are back and better than ever.

MYST III: EXILE

Myst killed the adventure genre — prepare for rebirth

If there's one title guaranteed to provoke arguments between gamers, it's *Myst*. The surreal adventure game (along with its sequel *Riven*) is a monumental best seller. It practically defines mainstream gaming — yet for the hardcore, *Myst* has been accused of everything from killing the adventure game genre to killing the mainstream's potential interest in other games due to its uneventful gameplay. So when Mattel Interactive announced that Cyan, the developers of the original two titles, had handed off the creation of *Myst III: Exile* to *Journeyman Project* (and *Star Trek: Hidden Evil*) creators Presto Studios, most gamers greeted the news with a collective yawn. "Why should we care?" we asked. To answer that question, *PC Gamer* took an early look at the game, and talked to the development team, trying to discover why anyone should.

With Cyan acting in merely an advisory capacity, *Exile*'s storyline starts out fairly simply. Ten years after the events of *Riven*, Atrus and Catherine, the married pair you rescued in the first games, have moved away from Myst Island. In their new home, an island called Tomanha, the couple are blessed by a baby girl named Yeesha. Unfortunately, all hopes for a quiet life are dashed when a mysterious new villain surfaces. Played by veteran actor Brad Dourif (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Dune*), he seeks revenge against Atrus' family. Apparently his world was destroyed by Sirrus and Achear, Atrus' sons, and he's out for vengeance.

One of the criticisms leveled at the Myst series is that while the games were heavy on beautiful images and atmosphere, they were helium light on actual gameplay. Producer Greg Uhler takes this criticism to heart. "One of the issues in *Riven*, more than *Myst*, was the very openness of the game's structure," he says. "You could explore 90 percent of the game without solving any puzzles. It could be difficult to understand quite what was going on or what you were supposed to be doing." As a result, Uhler and the game's author, Mary DeMarle, are working to tie the game's storyline and puzzles more tightly together. Although it will still allow for leisurely exploration, *Exile* will offer clearer goals, more information as puzzles get solved, and concrete rewards in the form of story nuggets.

"Nothing much actually happened in *Myst* and *Riven*," says DeMarle. This time, you will have a sense of being caught up in an ongoing story. You will converse with several creatures and witness important events through FMV cut-scenes as you solve puzzles, more like a conventional adventure game. Both Uhler and DeMarle were quick to emphasize that the game imposes no time

F.Y.I.

CATEGORY: Adventure

DEVELOPER: Presto Studios

PUBLISHER: Mattel Interactive

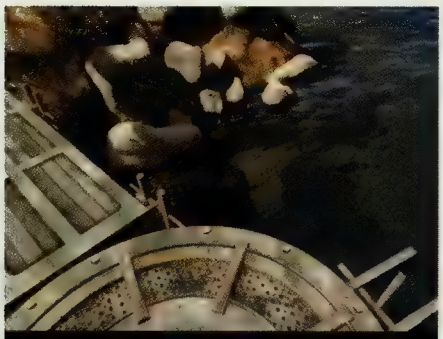
PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 75%

RELEASE DATE: First quarter 2001

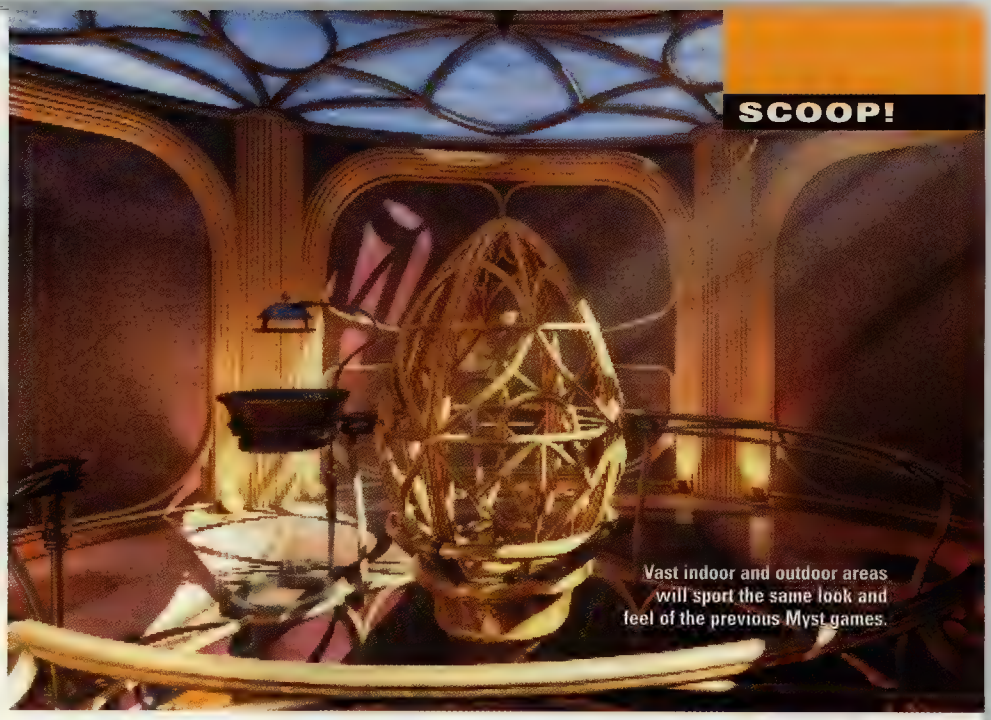
IN A NUTSHELL: Presto Studios tries to atone for the sins of *Riven*.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: Developer Cyan has passed the torch to Presto, which is aiming to reinvigorate the adventure genre with actual true-to-goodness gameplay among the amazing picturesque scenery and surreal tale.

www.DailyRadar.com



Myst III does not require a 3D accelerator, but owners of them will be treated to enhanced effects.



Vast indoor and outdoor areas will sport the same look and feel of the previous Myst games.

limits that might disturb the dream-like quality of the other Myst games.

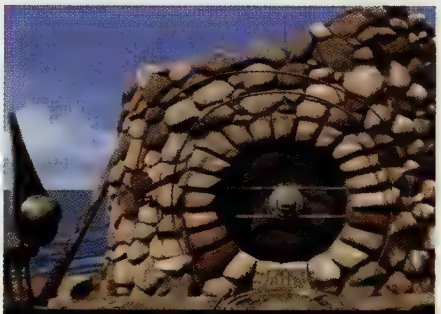
Unlike *Riven*, which took place in one locale, *Exile* will go back to the hub-and-island structure of *Myst*. As a result, each of *Exile*'s five new worlds (or "ages") will boast distinctive architecture and also a distinct puzzle style. One world, for example, will be filled with object manipulation puzzles, while others will have mechanical puzzles or mathematical puzzles. The "Canyon Age" that we witnessed has buildings reminiscent of Native American pueblo houses embedded in cliffs combined with lots of copper and brass machines that appear lifted from a 1940 edition of *Popular Mechanics*.

The original *Myst* certainly pioneered pre-rendered 3D environments, but most hardcore gamers criticized it for being little more than an interactive slide show. "We gave serious thought to what we wanted the game to look like and how that might impact our audience," says Uhler. Presto contemplated and rejected using a real-time 3D engine and CG characters because they felt that using truly cutting edge technology might put the game out of reach of most of *Myst*'s fan base. *Exile* will sport pre-rendered images displayed in real-time panoramic nodes that allow you to swivel 360 degrees in a model similar to the one used in Presto's own Journeyman series. It allows puzzles to have a spatial dimension by making you examine components and information on floors and ceilings. While the game will have a software mode, the high-end crowd will be able to enjoy many special effects that will only be visible with a 3D accelerator.

Presto also decided to go with live actors and mostly linear cut-scenes. According to Creative Director, Phil Saunders, "It came down to wanting our audience to identify with the characters they've come to know and love," he says. "That requires real people, not polygonal figures." The technique required new technology, allowing you to move around the world while interacting with video characters who have been 3D composited into the world.

Rand Miller (one of *Myst*'s original designers, along with brother Robyn) has agreed to reprise his role as Atrus in the cut-scenes and new villain Brad Dourif is already generating significant Internet buzz. "Brad's a huge fan of the original games," says DeMarle, "and he brought a lot to the role."

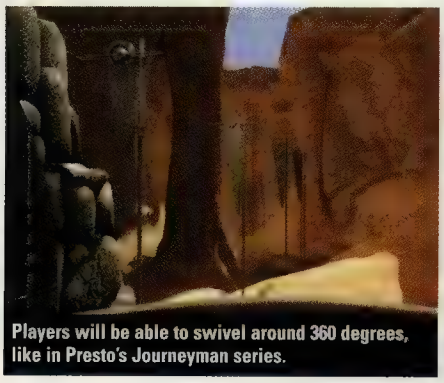
So did *Myst* kill adventure games? "You have to look at the number of really bad *Myst* clones if you really want to find the culprit," says Uhler. No doubt, in the wake of *Myst*'s sales chart dominance the adventure game market was flooded with crappy, vaguely surreal, static adventures comprised mostly of lighthouses and fog. Many game companies slapped together a string of vacation photos from Cape Cod and called it an adventure game.



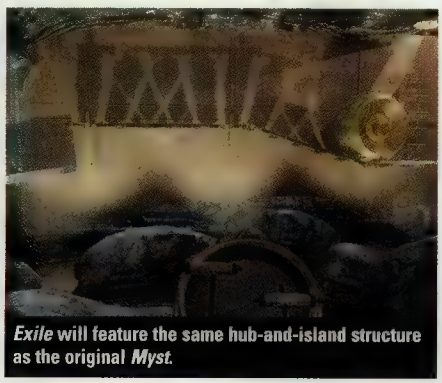
Like the other Myst games, *Myst III* is all about exploration and puzzle-solving.

Presto Studios, however, is hoping that what *Riven* took away, *Exile* can restore. "*Myst* has a built-in fan base that's looking for the dreamy quality of the first two games," says Uhler, "and we've got that. By putting in more traditional adventure game elements, though, we're appealing to the real gamers out there." Presto hopes that the success of *Exile* might resurrect interest in the traditional adventure game among gaming companies. "The audience is out there," Saunders says. "they're just waiting for the right product to be produced." We'll know if *Exile* is that product for sure when it's released early next year.

— Allen Rausch



Players will be able to swivel around 360 degrees, like in Presto's Journeyman series.



Exile will feature the same hub-and-island structure as the original *Myst*.



Presto Studios is hoping that, like with the previous games, *Myst III* will appeal to gamers of all types.

Boston

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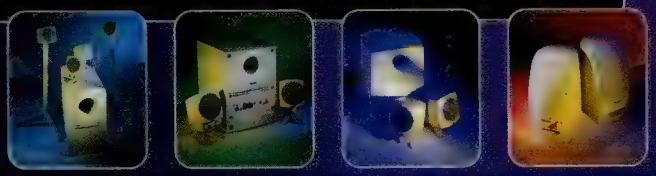
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Boston

Quake III: Team Arena

id Software gives their deathmatch coliseum a cooperative restyling

An expansion pack for *Quake III Arena* was inevitable. We've seen at least one for each of id's games since *Wolfenstein 3D*, and let's face it, it's an easy buck. That id Software is designing it internally is the surprising detail. They haven't delved into the mundane world of add-ons since they developed the *Master Levels* for *Doom*. But low and behold, the same team that brought you *Q3A* is back, working together in more ways than one.

Quake III: Team Arena, as you can easily guess, is a team-based modification to *Q3A*. "We had a bit of time on our hands while we worked out the next game design and technology," says id designer Graeme Devine, "so we decided it was best to focus on extending *Q3A* into a team-oriented game since *Q3A* focuses directly on deathmatch only."

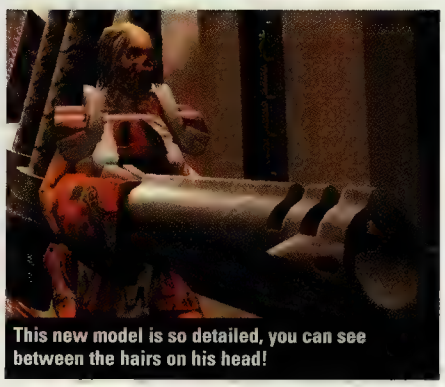
The pack will include 12 new maps, plus the original *Q3A* map set reworked for the new game types, and new powerups, one of which is an awesome kamikaze mode where suicide equals mass destruction. It will feature a new user interface and menu system, three new weapons (nailgun, chaingun, and proximity mines), and a bunch of player models with interchangeable heads. New game types include Capture the Flag, one flag CTF, Harvester, and Overload.



The nailgun makes a triumphant return.



In Harvester, the skulls you collect bob behind you like ducks in a row.



This new model is so detailed, you can see between the hairs on his head!

In Harvester, you run around shooting enemies and collect a skull after each frag. Each harvested skull attaches itself to form a trailing procession behind you, creating a cool blur-like effect. Additional skulls make you both more visible to the enemy, and more valuable to your team. The object is to reap several skulls, return home with them, and score points for your team.

Overload is a game of kill the queen bee. Each base has a skull deep in its chambers. When a skull endures a set amount of damage, the game is over. Each team must defend its skull while advancing on its opponents'; it's a classic balance of offense and defense.

Teams will be able to identify themselves with new logos. According to Devine, "Team logos appear in the levels, on the player, and in the UI." Plus, though several are available in the game, ambitious players and clans can add their own custom graphic to the .pak file.

As for engine enhancements, the game code is "pretty much the same," says Devine. "The model code has been tweaked to allow for more animation, but the basic physics is all intact." Ponytails now sway in the wind in an effect that may even make Lara Croft jealous.

For when your Internet connection is down, there will be a similar single-player component to *Q3A*. "We have the same tier structure in place," says Devine, "although this time we're team oriented. It's really rather cool." He also ensures us that the 'bots have all taken very well to their new rules and environments.

We're looking forward to seeing how id expands its own game. With John Carmack working on technology for their forthcoming *Doom* title, one has to wonder if the formidable, and certainly classic, Quake series is about to see its last hurrah. When we asked Devine what the future could hold, he coyly responded, "You know...never say never."

— Jeremy Williams

F.Y.I.

CATEGORY: Action

DEVELOPER: id Software

PUBLISHER: Activision

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 90%

RELEASE DATE: 4th Quarter

IN A NUTSHELL: An expansion of *Quake III Arena* focusing totally on team-based combat.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: Cooperative play was sorely lacking from *Q3A* off the shelf. id's first in-house expansion in six years will fill that gap.

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Tomb Raider Chronicles

Surely you didn't think she was dead

Hands up who got to the end of *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation* (*TR: LR*). Not many of you, I see. No surprise, really; Lara's really outstayed her welcome. There's only so much spelunking we can take. Only so many pairs of shorts uncomfortably riding into parts merely imagined can capture the hearts of horny teens. We're PC gamers, dammit, and we demand more.

Well, we're not going to get the all-singing, all-dancing new engine and new gameplay for sweet Lara's fifth excursion. In fact, Core Design's Managing Director Adrian Smith is almost apologetic about foisting this latest adventure upon us: "*Tomb Raider: Chronicles* [the new game] started as a movie tie-in, but the game had to ship in November, and the movie isn't out until May," he says. On top of that, *TL: LR* was the end of Lara's current story arc, and the team was reluctant to move the story on since it ended in game four.

So what to do? How about borrowing an idea or two from some of our greatest soap operas? See, *Chronicles* begins four days after the end of *Last Revelation* with Lara seemingly deceased. As in, dead. No, really. Mourning this blistering tragedy are Lara's old pals including Pierre and Jean Yves. Sat in the comfort of Croft Manor the group begins to reminisce about "the good old days" when Lara was saving this from that and him from her (and wasn't, like, dead). What a wonderfully convoluted segue into four unconnected Lara tales.



"Next time I tell you to take out the garbage, take it out!"

A scenic tour of the city of Rome with traditional exploratory gameplay kicks off this medley of previously untold Lara antics. The assorted mourners then toast her derring-do in an action-focused submarine base encounter. The whiskey starts flowing a little too freely among the storytellers at this point as the conversation turns to the nubile 16-year old Lara's trip to an Irish island. Fortunately, the gameplay style will also take a twist as this chapter won't feature any guns, but will require the solving of puzzles for Lara to defeat the nefarious ghosts and ghouls. Finally, the last part introduces a buddy that helps Lara traverse a hi-tech office building.

As is customary around this stage of a Tomb Raider preview, it should be noted that not everything is the same as the last game. As the engine frantically pulls its last, dying breath, a couple of new moves have been added, such as walking a tightrope. Likewise, the dreadful AI continues its meandering path to mediocrity with advances in enemies' line of sight and hearing. A couple of new outfits (including a *Matrix*-like tight leather number) make an appearance (and disappearance, no doubt, courtesy of an over-attentive fan). More importantly, Core is also releasing the TR level editor complete with all the levels from *Last Revelation*, all the tools, and complete tutorial files — an excellent touch to what could have been a throwaway giveaway.

The linear pattern could be a real blessing since it's allowed the team to focus on gameplay options throughout. "It's nice not to have a massive story, but just jump in and get going," says Smith, "and we've done it before, so I hope we know how to do it." Fifth time lucky? Don't expect the world, the concept is simple but that could be the most effective policy — I just hope it all ends with Patrick Duffy emerging from Lara's shower...

— Rob Smith

TOMB RAIDER
THE NEXT GENERATION

No surprise that Core is prepping a whole new series of Lara Croft adventures, but what is intriguing is the gameplay style and delivery planned for the new wave. We understand that starting in late 2001, Lara will undertake a five-year mission ("To boldly go..." etc.) on the next generation console systems (and the PC). That's five *actual* years, with all the game components supplied in an episodic format. A Hollywood scriptwriter has undertaken the gargantuan task of plotting Lara's story course over this time period, factoring in the possibility of releasing tangential episodes along the way that reveal new characters, and follow different paths.

It's believed that Lara will adopt a much more edgy tone, with the story being influenced by movies such as *The Exorcist* and *Omen*. The squeaky clean image that limited certain gameplay options should be removed, allowing the freedom for Lara to have a much more interesting personality, and get herself into more complex situations.

F.Y.I.

CATEGORY: Action/Adventure

DEVELOPER: Core Design

PUBLISHER: Eidos Interactive

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 80%

RELEASE DATE: Q4 2000

IN A NUTSHELL: Tomb Raider 5

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: It really is the last hurrah for the venerable engine, and Core Design means it this time. Aside from that, the level editor will be released with the game, allowing you to create more, er, tombs to, well, raid.

Battle Realms

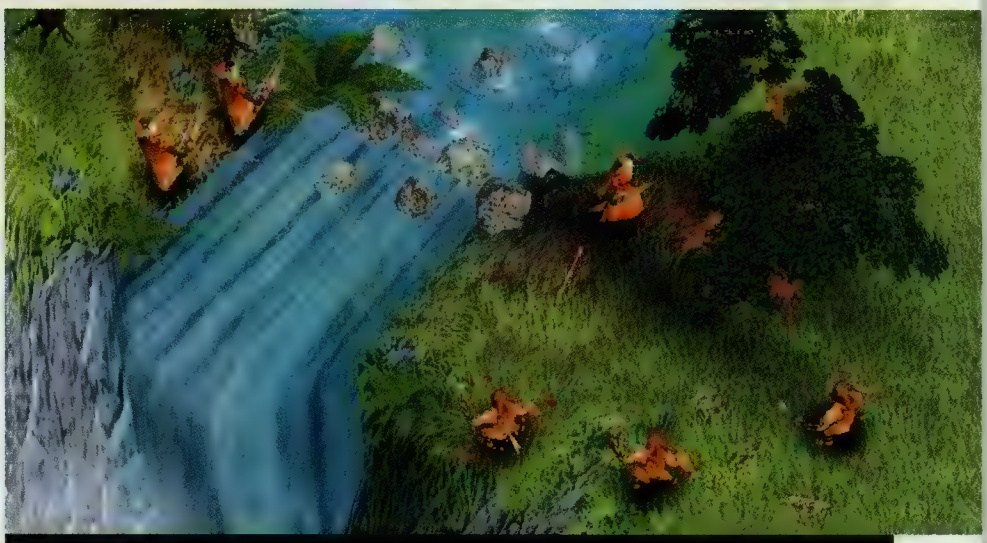
A real-time kung fu warlord extravaganza

We all know the drill with real-time strategy games. A future filled with soulless corporate warfare, right? Not anymore, thanks to the efforts of Ed Del Castillo (producer of *Command & Conquer*) and his team at upstart developer Liquid Ent.

Battle Realms opens up in a pond filled with lazy, majestic koi fish — and then the camera pulls out to reveal the surrounding village and forest. Just like that, you're in the top-down real-time view of the game. It's a neat trick that best exemplifies the team's commitment to grounding *Battle Realms* in the real nitty-gritty of a "living world." As troops tromp through the trees, they'll scatter flocks of birds that can give away their position, and when a hut catches fire from a flaming arrow, those flames can spread to other huts and start an inferno that can consume the town.

The setting of this "living world" is a feudal Asia drawn straight from the celluloid reels of a 1970s martial arts flick. The plan is to bring the magic-fueled, wire-assisted, larger-than-life combat of those classic films to the PC.

Battle Realms features a deeper level of unit development than you generally find in an RTS game. If you send an archer into a temple and teach him alchemy, the resulting "advanced" missile fighter will be a musketeer. For the first time, each individual unit will have its own inventory. Tracking all this detail is made easier by helpful tool-tips that pop up when your mouse hovers momentarily over any unit or icon.



Spectacular, lush backgrounds will make *Battle Realms* a feast for the eyes.

Battles will be rendered beautifully in a 3D landscape that caresses the cornea. Units splash through water as they cross rivers. True line-of-sight takes advantage of key terrain features, lending strategic importance to high ground. Each unit has studied skills partial to his or her occupation, and the game will display them in combat. For example, archers have developed a unique martial art centered around kicking, which is designed to get the most use out of a fighter's legs while allowing for him to protect his precious bow. Thus, archers who find themselves trapped in melee combat will bust out with the leg-based martial arts style.

Don't expect the typical "units crashing in chaos" mode of battle, either. Each unit in *Battle Realms* enjoys a bigger "border area" in fighting, so that they keep a bigger distance from one another even in melee combat. Rather than stand eye-to-eye and bludgeon one another until someone croaks (which is the norm in RTS games), they'll dance, feint and parry, and take steps of retreat.

In short, says Del Castillo, "It'll *look* like people fighting for their lives."

Not only do units that survive each mission reappear in the next, they will be granted new levels of achievement and can be modified by temple study into new variations.

"It's a steeper learning curve," says Del Castillo, "but it rewards you with so much more value for each unit. You'll be commanding developed, skilled characters, not just units on a battlefield." Like a gaming chef, Liquid Entertainment is mixing flavorful roleplaying and RTS elements into an ethereal souffle. It smells enticing. We'll see how it tastes this Fall. Mmmm...souffle.

— Daniel Morris

YOUR STYLE CANNOT DEFEAT MY STYLE!

A quick list from designer Ed Del Castillo, citing the biggest movie influences on *Battle Realms* (comments by me, Dan Morris):



ENTER THE DRAGON: Of course. A classic. Bruce Lee takes on all comers and sends them all to the ground. An epic of mass martial-arts mayhemrifficness.

MASTERS OF THE FLYING GUILLOTINE: They're not kidding! This guy has a portable guillotine that he can throw; it's a razor-filled basket, and it snaps your head off in mid-fight! *Battle Realms* features a flying-guillotinesman. Cool.

EIGHT DIAGRAM POLE FIGHTERS: I've never even heard of it, but it scores an A on the basis of its title alone. Next on my "to rent" list!

F.Y.I.

CATEGORY: Real-time strategy

DEVELOPER: Liquid Entertainment

PUBLISHER: Crave Entertainment

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 60%

RELEASE DATE: Fall 2001

IN A NUTSHELL: The first PC title from Crave, *Battle Realms* is the brainchild of a Westwood Studios vet with a grand vision for a real-time strategy epic set in a "living world" of forests, streams, wildlife, and villages, set against a backdrop of movie-style medieval warfare.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: It looks to be a welcome break from the tedious monotony of futuristic RTS games, and features a ton of cool units and gameplay ideas. Plus, its 3D engine places it high on the list of best-looking games in the genre.

www.DailyRadar.com

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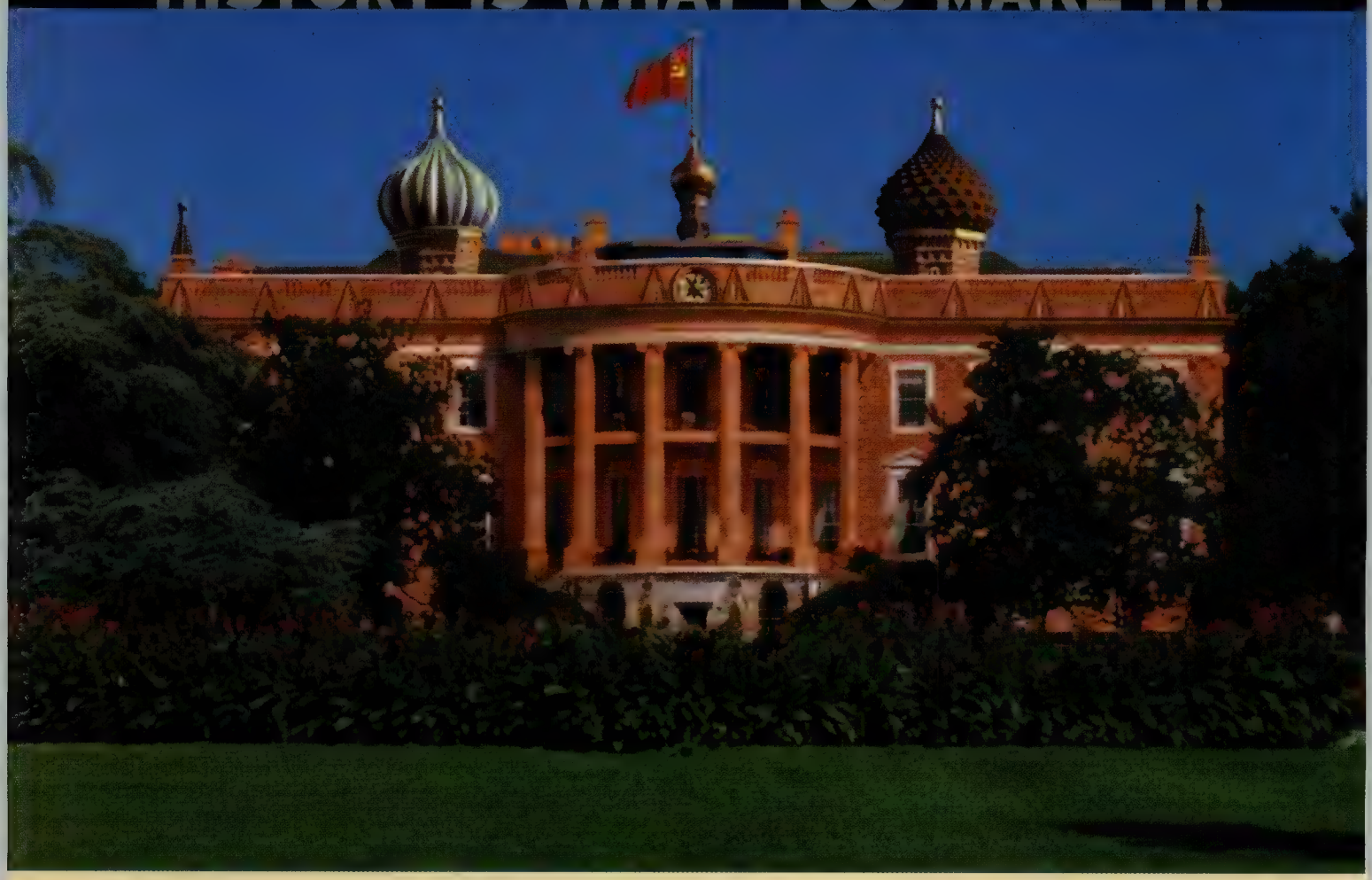
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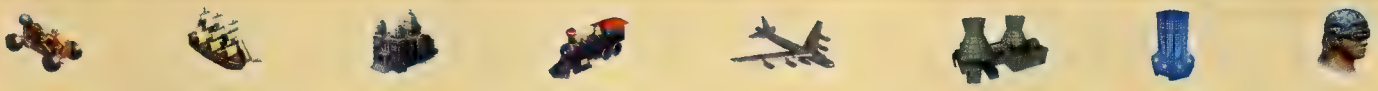
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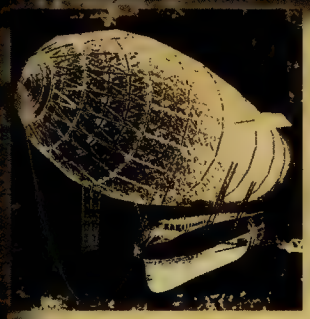
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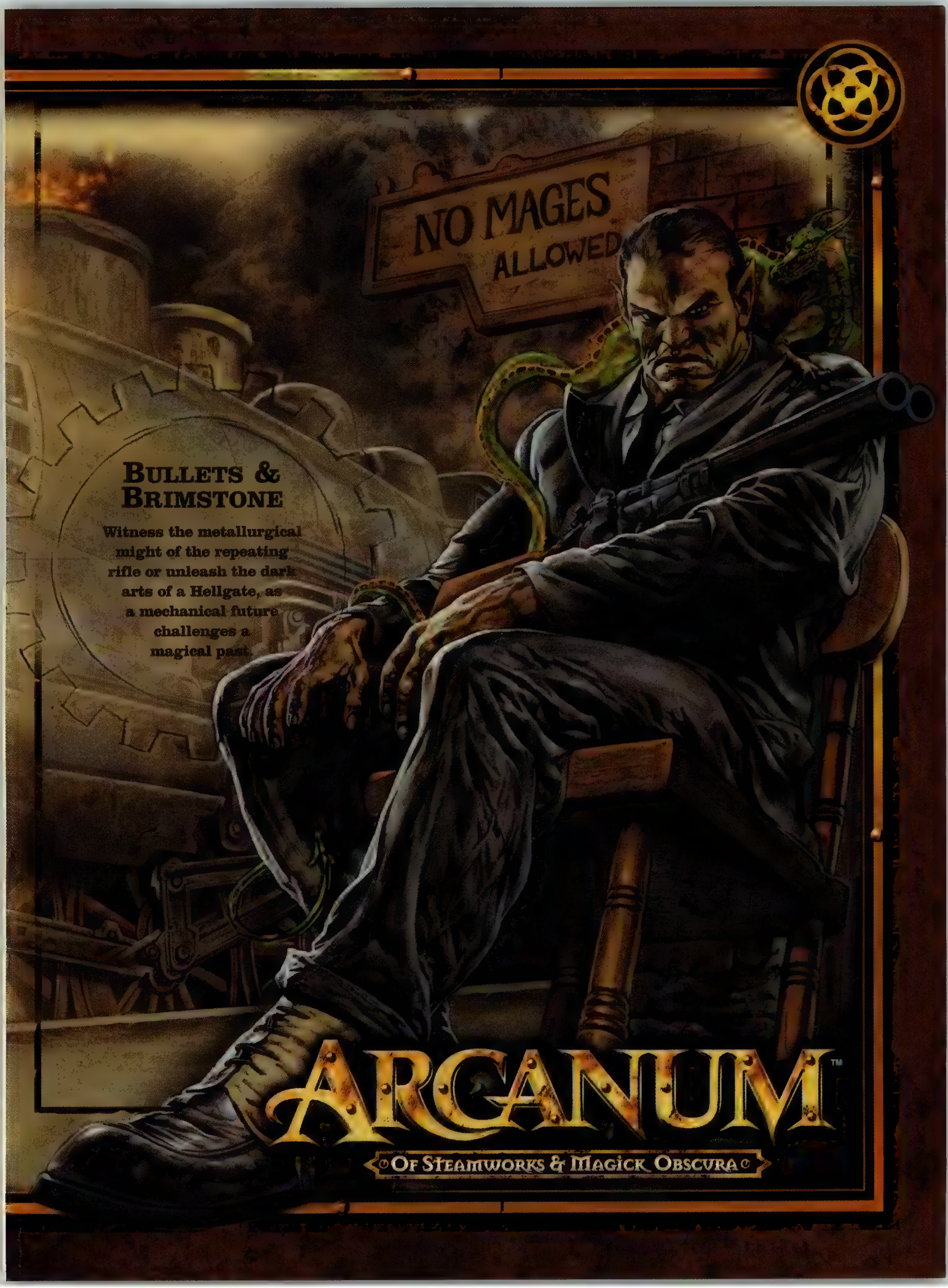
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Where Have All The Legends Gone?

They brought us some of PC gaming's classics, but what are they doing now? We find out.


Tim Schafer's Monkey Island series is one of the best in the business.

Jordan Mechner, Andy Hollis, Tim Schafer, Jane Jensen; these are just a few of the visionaries who helped make gaming what it is today (and were members of our illustrious Game Gods line-up from the September 1999 issue). But where have they been lately, and what have they been up to? We were able to get in touch with some of these legends of gaming to do a bit of catching up:

>> TIM SCHAFER

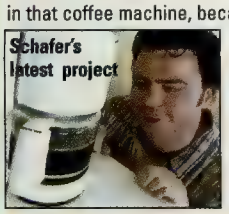
Claim to Fame> The Monkey Island Series, *Day of the Tentacle, Full Throttle,* and *Grim Fandango.*

PCG: Where have you been?

Tim Schafer: I've been setting up a new game studio. These things take time. For example: a coffee machine had to be purchased. People don't realize — this new-company stuff is hard!

PCG: What are you doing nowadays?

TS: Nowadays, I'm trying to figure out how to plug in that coffee machine, because there's no outlet on the wall where I want to put it. And, also, I'm negotiating a publishing contract. The name of the publisher is shhhhh-secret!


Schafer's latest project

PCG: What's next for Tim Schafer?

TS: Step one: sign deal. Step two: make game. Step three: popularity and success!

PCG: Who is the Tim Schafer of the 21st Century?

TS: I tell ya, that's a good question. I have a lot of things now that I never thought I'd have: my own company, facial hair, a Dreamcast...It's pretty scary, but very exciting.

>> JANE JENSEN

Claim to Fame> The Gabriel Knight series.

PCG: What are you doing now?

Jane Jensen: Working on a novel for Del Rey entitled *Dante's Equation.*

PCG: Are you still involved with gaming?

JJ: Not at the moment. I've been working on this novel since *GK3* shipped last November.

PCG: What is life like after *Gabriel Knight*?

JJ: Quiet! I love working at home, and writing a novel is a simple lifestyle that I'm enjoying — at least for a while.

PCG: What are your plans for the future?

JJ: I haven't made any decisions. The key for me will be to see how the new book is received — in other words, how much time I want to continue to spend on novels. I'd like to do interactive work in the future, though I suspect it will not be in the same format – i.e. it will probably not be stand-alone PC adventure games.


Jane Jensen's *Gabriel Knight*

>> ANDY HOLLIS

Claim to Fame> *Gunship, Longbow 2, Jane's F-15,* and much more.

PCG: What are you doing now?

Andy Hollis: I have hooked back up with EA Baltimore, the ex-Jane's development team that I founded four years ago, and we are doing a PC version of one of the key EA Sports franchise products. It fits well with one of my personal sports passions and draws well in a design sense from the flight sim experience.

PCG: Andy Hollis, doing a sports game?

AH: If you knew what it was, though, you would understand. The game we are doing is really a simulation under the hood, just not airplanes and missiles.

PCG: Will we ever see another flight sim with your name on it?

AH: Perhaps. There are no definitive plans either way at this point.

PCG: What is your opinion of the future of simulation games?

AH: If you are talking about traditional combat flight sims, I see them as being in remission. What is out there and waiting is the game that does for combat flight sims what *Command & Conquer* did for wargames.


Andy Hollis' F-15

>> JORDAN MECHNER

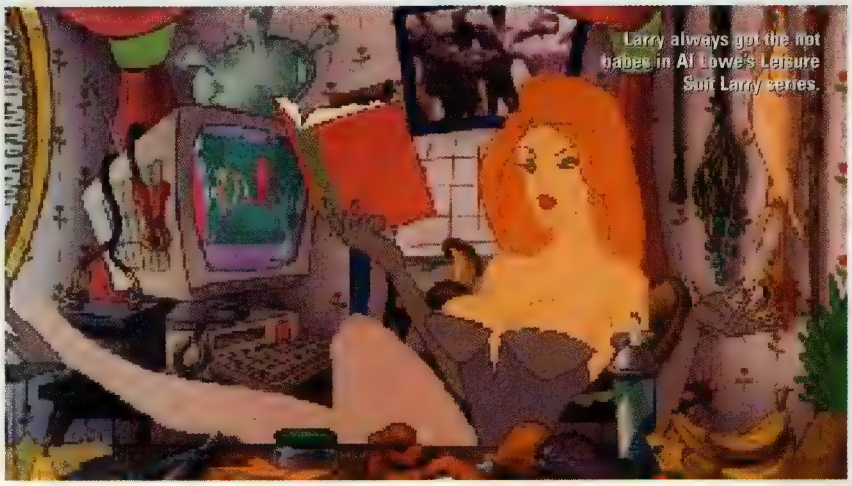
Claim to Fame> *Karateka,* Prince of Persia series, *The Last Express.*

PCG: Where have you been?

Jordan Mechner: Getting married, becoming a dad, and starting a new career in a new town!

PCG: In our "Game Gods" interview, you mentioned your interest in screenwriting and filmmaking. Are you still pursuing that?

JM: I'm now screenwriting and directing full time — if the words 'full time' can ever apply to the period



Larry always got the hot babes in Al Lowe's Leisure Suit Larry series.

when a film is not actually in production.

PCG: What's life like after *Prince of Persia*?

JM: I'm constantly surprised at how many people I run into who remember *Prince of Persia* and *Karateka*. I think it must be that the people who played those games as kids are now grown up and starting their own careers. How old does that make me?



Jordan Mechner's *Prince of Persia*

PCG: At least the same age as our Editor-in-Chief. Are you still involved with gaming? If not, will you ever be again?

JM: The last time I said "never" in an interview was when I was asked if I thought there would ever be a *Prince of Persia 3D*. So, never say never.

PCG: What's in store for you in the future?

JM: I've just finished a thriller screenplay that I hope you will be able to see one day at your local multiplex! In a completely different vein, I'm directing a documentary about Chavez Ravine, L.A.'s legendary vanished neighborhood that was razed in the fifties to build Dodger Stadium.

>> AL LOWE

Claim to Fame> Leisure Suit Larry series

PCG: Where have you been?

Al Lowe: I've been right here at *www.allowe.com*, same as always, writing my free daily joke E-mail to my hundreds of subscribers. The question is: where have you been and why haven't you been by to say "Hello!"

PCG: We thought you were dead. Sorry. What's life like after Leisure Suit Larry?

AL: What makes you think there is life after Larry? Actually, I retired for a while until I learned how hard I truly sucked at golf. I then discovered an Internet startup company called *jacknabbit.com* that had a great idea, real-time online appointment scheduling. I'm the Chief Technology Officer.

PCG: Are you still into gaming?

AL: Not so much. I've been so busy at *jacknabbit.com* that I haven't played at lot of games lately. Of course, that may just be because there aren't a lot of games out now that I enjoy playing! What in the hell has happened to gaming lately? Doesn't anybody laugh around here anymore?

>> ROBERTA WILLIAMS

Claim to Fame> King's Quest series, *Phantasmagoria*

Roberta Williams was taking a vacation in France when wrote this article. We did get a statement from a spokesperson at Sierra. "Roberta is taking a much deserved hiatus from the 20 years she contributed greatly to the games industry. She and Ken live in the great state of Washington and enjoy spending time with their family. Roberta is always thinking of new ideas for interactive story-telling — perhaps on the internet — and could conceivably drop back into the 'biz' at some future date."

NOW AND THEN

The Top-Selling Games Today...

Rank	Game and Publisher	PCG Rating
1	Diablo II Blizzard	94%
2	The Sims Electronic Arts	95%
3	Who Wants To Be A Millionaire 2 Disney	N/A
4	RollerCoaster Tycoon Hasbro Interactive	89%
5	StarCraft Blizzard	92%
6	SimCity 3000 Unlimited Electronic Arts	89%
7	Corkscrew Follies Hasbro Interactive	N/A
8	Age Of Empires II Microsoft	94%
9	Sim Mania Pack Electronic Arts	N/A
10	Unreal Tournament Infogrames	90%

...And This Time Five Years Ago

Rank	Game and Publisher	PCG Rating
1	Phantasmagoria Havas Interactive	88%
2	Myst Mattel Interactive	95%
3	Ultimate Doom GT Interactive	N/A
4	MechWarrior II Activision	95%
5	Doom II GT Interactive	90%
6	MS Flight Simulator Microsoft	N/A
7	Star Wars: Dark Forces LucasArts	92%
8	Command & Conquer Electronic Arts	91%
9	NASCAR I Havas Interactive	94%
10	Sim City 2000 Electronic Arts	95%

BY THE NUMBERS

Courtesy of PC Data, here are a few game sale comparisons:

GAME	FIRST APPEARED	TOTAL UNITS
Quake III Arena	Oct. 99	319,970
Unreal Tournament	April 99	255,226
Star Wars: Phantom Menace	May 99	337,866
Star Trek: Hidden Evil	Oct. 99	41,419
Soldier of Fortune	Feb. 00	100,919
Daikatana	Feb. 00	25,291

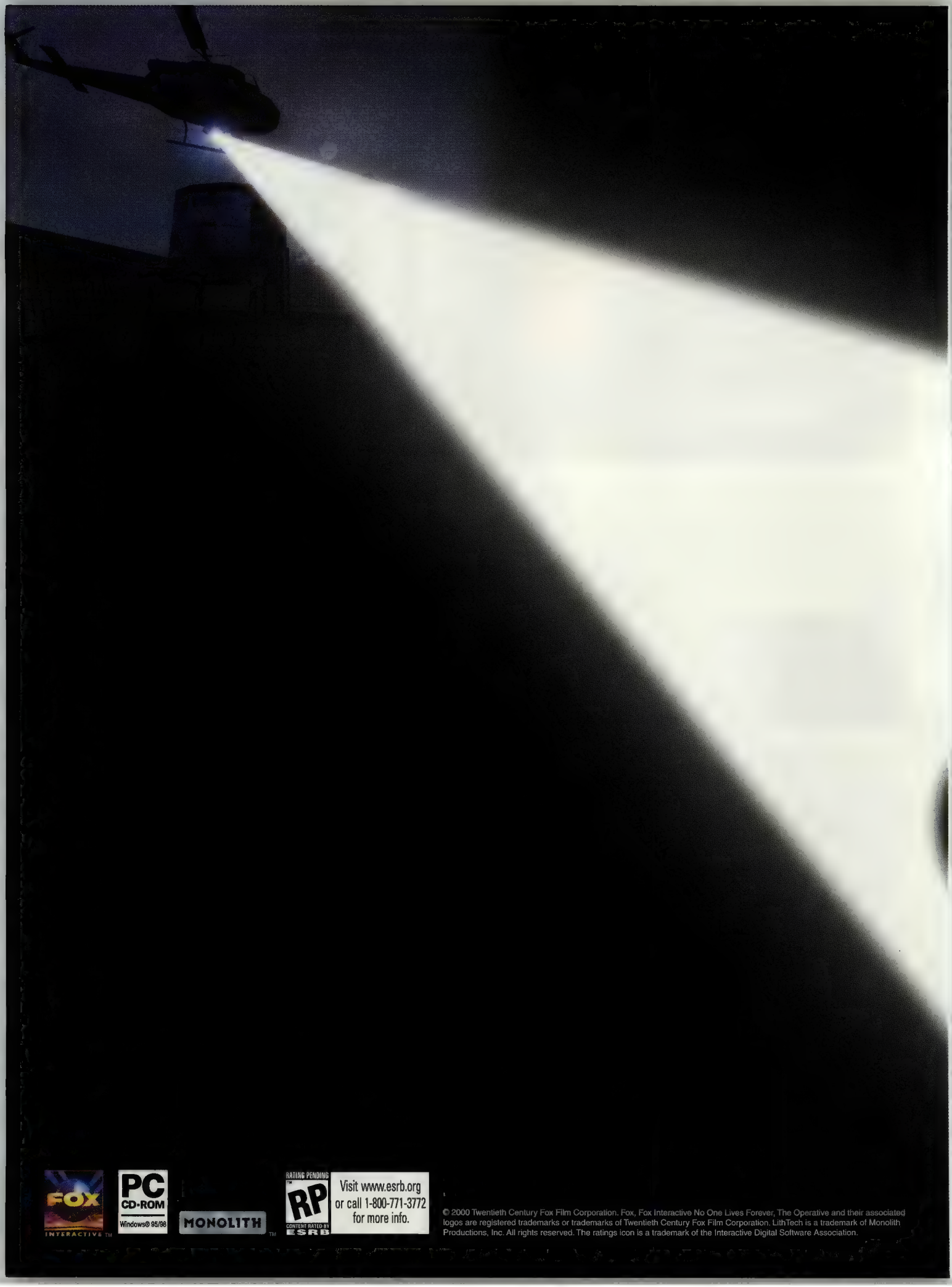
>>> THE PCG NEWS TICKER <<<

>> A new X-COM game is in the works. Called *X-COM Enforcer*, this third-person action game is scheduled to be released this fall. You will control a battle-droid built by an ex-X-COM scientist to fight off aliens. *Enforcer* is not to be confused with the first-person shooter *X-COM: Alliance*.

>> The Assistant Producer of *Baldur's Gate 2*, Ben Smedstad, has quit BioWare. Smedstad was also the Producer for the *Baldur's Gate* add-on, *Tales of the Sword Coast*. BioWare says his departure won't affect *Baldur's Gate 2*'s September release date.

>> Electronic Arts has gone and made every other publisher jealous by picking up the rights to the ever-so-popular Harry Potter series. EA now has exclusive rights to publish games based on the books about the young magician and his adventures in the Hogwarts school of magic.

>> Thief III has been confirmed. While there were doubts about the future of the series after Looking Glass Studios went out of business, it turns out that Eidos will keep the award-winning franchise alive under Warren Spector's umbrella at Ion Storm. Expect a preview soon.



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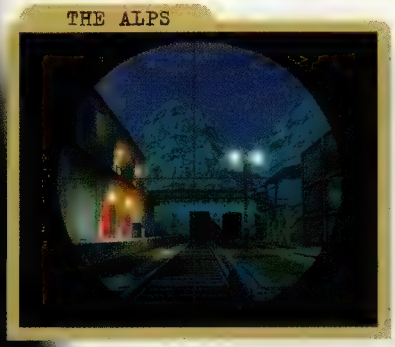
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We've got autographed copies of *F.A.K.K.2* and *Psycho Circus* to give away!

The people from Gathering of Developers have seen fit to bequeath us with five copies of *Heavy Metal F.A.K.K.2* and *KISS Psycho Circus*. Each copy has been autographed by their respective development teams. We have been ordered by G.O.D. to give out these games as prizes. All you need to do is send in an E-mail to *eyewitness@pcgamer.com* with "Metal Contest" in the subject heading.

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY NOVEMBER 30, 2000. ONLY ONE ENTRY PER PERSON. INCLUDE YOUR ADDRESS IN THE ENTRY SO WE HAVE SOMEPLACE TO SEND THE PRIZE TO IF YOU WIN! SEE ADDITIONAL CONTEST RULES ON PAGE 60.

More Fire and Brimstone

Blizzard announces a new *Diablo II* expansion, full of goodies



You will be able to take your existing character directly into the new act if you've already defeated Diablo in the original *Diablo II*.



Assassins will be specialists in hand-to-hand combat.

Take a note, kiddies; when your game sells millions of copies before it's even been out a year, release an expansion pack and rake in more millions. Case in point: Blizzard is bringing us the *Diablo II Expansion Set*.

This one looks like it'll be a keeper; it's chock full of new monsters such as the Overseer, a large, whip-wielding brute that controls smaller monsters called Suicide Minions that can be whipped into a frenzy by the Overseer and explode when they reach their target.

The *Expansion Set* will also introduce two new character classes. First up is the Assassin, deadly killers formed to watch for rogue magi that have been corrupted by evil. They focus on natural powers of the body and prefer to use magical items rather than casting spells. Expect some killer kung-fu action.

The second new character class is the Druid. Hailing from the northern forests of Scosglen, these magic users are masters of nature and can control beasts of the land. They are proficient in the use of Elemental Magic, but their biggest trick is the ability to transform into beasts, such as a huge cave bear or dire wolf.

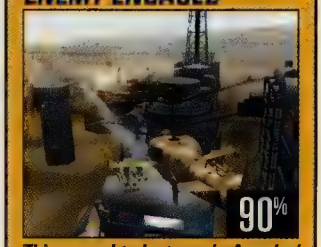
These new heroes will embark on a journey through the Barbarian Highlands to track down Baal, the last of the prime evils. Six new quests are promised, with the entire expansion pack being somewhere between the size of act III and act IV of *Diablo II*. Topping it all off are thousands of new weapons, items, and armor types.

Due out in early 2001, this new add-on will require the full version of *Diablo II*. Look for a full-blown review soon.

PC GAMER RECOMMENDS

You just can't go wrong with any of these games:

ENEMY ENGAGED



This sequel to last year's *Apache/Havoc* could be "Sim of the Year."

WARLORDS BATTLECRY



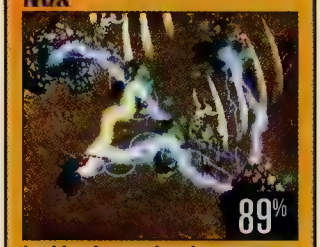
With deep character development and smooth online play this RTS is worth the price of admission.

MINDROVER



A good game that lets you be creative? This is fun and educational!

NOX



Looking for another dungeon-crawling challenge? Try this.

THE PCG NEWS TICKER

>> *Microsoft Train Simulator* is on the way. Now train engineer wannabes don't have to be stuck with little electric models and tiny plastic trees. The developers are the same people that brought us the award-winning *Microsoft Flight Simulator*. It should be available in Spring 2001.

>> Richard Bishop has been added to the *Empire Earth* development team. Also known as "Methos," Bishop is considered one of the best *Age of Empires* players in the world, and has been a finalist in *Age of Empires* tournaments on Case's Ladder and The Zone on the Internet.

>> Another *Rollercoaster Tycoon* add-on will soon be available. Called *Rollercoaster Tycoon: Loopy Landscapes*, the expansion will add new rides and attractions, and 30 new scenarios. It should be available at your nearest software dealer now.

>> Firaxis has hired Michael Bates as a Senior Artist. He's currently working on *Civilization III*. Bates had previously worked for MicroProse on titles such as *Gunship!*, *F-15 III*, *Across the Rhine*, and *M1 Tank Platoon II*.

WAITING IS THE HARDEST PART

Things are much sweeter when you've been wanting them for a long time. Scott Fite has been sweetly anticipating *Duke Nukem Forever*, and who can blame him? He's our winner for this month's Waiting is the Hardest Part contest. To try your luck, send an E-mail to *eyewitness@pcgamer.com* and let us know what your most anticipated game is. One entry per household per month. Winners are notified by E-mail. See additional rules on page 60.

1. Shadowbane — 20%
2. Morrowind — 14%
3. Team Fortress 2 — 10%
4. Halo — 9%
5. Baldur's Gate 2 — 7%
6. WarCraft III — 5%
7. Ultima Worlds Online: Origin — 5%
8. Tribes 2 — 4%
9. Duke Nukem Forever — 3%
10. Red Alert 2 — 2%

GAME FACE



Show us yours. Who are you? Let us know by sending your picture and answering the same questions this guy did to *gameface@pcgamer.com*.

NAME>>> Greg Ferrell
ONLINE NAME>>> Raven
FROM>>> Tampa, Florida
LAST GAME PLAYED>>> *Falcon 4.0, CounterStrike*
LOOKING FORWARD TO>>> *Team Fortress 2, Combat Flight Sim 2*
FAVORITE GAMING SNACK>>> Ice cold Mountain Dew and french fries

Playing for Keeps

Westwood celebrates its 15th Anniversary

Such a dynamic industry as game design lends itself to fly-by-night stars, one-hit wonders, and now creeping consolidation. As a situation similar to the movie studio setup steadily eases into place, it's intriguing to see a few development names retain a dominant aura. As Westwood Studios celebrates its 15th anniversary, we talked to the developers' founders, Brett Sperry and Louis Castle about longevity, and how to get ahead in the world of game developing.

What's the main lesson you've learned in running a game design company at the top of this topsy-turvy industry for 15 years?
LC: The Boy Scout Motto, "Do your best" and make sure you stick around with people who feel the same. When a group of talented individuals really give it their all the product will probably be good, if not great.
BS: Always make the game you'd want to play yourself. Whenever you start guessing what other people want, you get into trouble.

Westwood has scored huge successes over its history; how many games got killed in the development process along the way to weeding out those that would be big?
LC: I'm fairly proud of this record, actually. Countless ideas were killed while being fully fleshed out [but] I can count on one hand the internal titles that were canceled after the project was fully under way, and most of those were canceled because our publishers at the time could not continue to fund them. I think we have completed well over 70 titles and hundreds of SKUs in the past 15 years, so that's quite a record. We have also never shipped a product that did not generate a profit. Some were pretty close to break even, but all made at least a little something.
BS: I think we've killed two games in Westwood's history, and those were very early in development. We enthusiastically pound and perfect a game idea before we devote development resources to it.





Brett Sperry (top) and Louis Castle. Nice chair, guys.

With the focus on core franchises, is there any likelihood that Westwood will try out single products as it did with *Blade Runner*?
LC: We are always listening and considering licenses. *Blade Runner, Monopoly,* and *The Lion King* were all very exciting properties for creative reasons.
BS: Absolutely. Next year we'll be announcing two exciting new franchises that are unlike anything we've ever done before.

Is there any future for either *Lands of Lore* or *Legends of Kyrandia*?
LC: Perhaps. Both worlds are rich in background and characters. We even started looking into another *Lands of Lore* next year but we just have too many new titles under development and can't handle any more right now.

If you could give one piece of advice to aspiring development studios out there, what would it be?
LC: I would say to expect the worst and prepare for it. Then enjoy whatever comes along since it is bound to be a pleasant surprise.
BS: Get good people and take care of them.

And finally, 15 years from now, what will you and Westwood Studios be doing?
LC: Wow, who can really say? I guess I'm sure I will be playing games, and I would hope I'm still making them, at least consulting or directing. I just never know how long people are going to let me get away with being paid for my hobby.
BS: Still making games, I'm sure. The question is for what kind of machine. Will Internet lag no longer be an issue? Will we be pushing a million polygons? Ten million? A hundred million? Will we be on Star Trek's holodeck? And when I am not making games I will probably be absorbed — a part of a living cybernetic world. Probably as an Emperor or secret agent or crazy heretic living in tiny hut in some forest!

See more of this interview at *www.pcgamer.com*.

EA is working on their first massively multiplayer online game. Dubbed *Majestic*, the game will be an interactive mystery suspense thriller. Similar to the movie *The Game*, *Majestic* will actually fax and phone players to create a level of interaction unlike any other game in history.

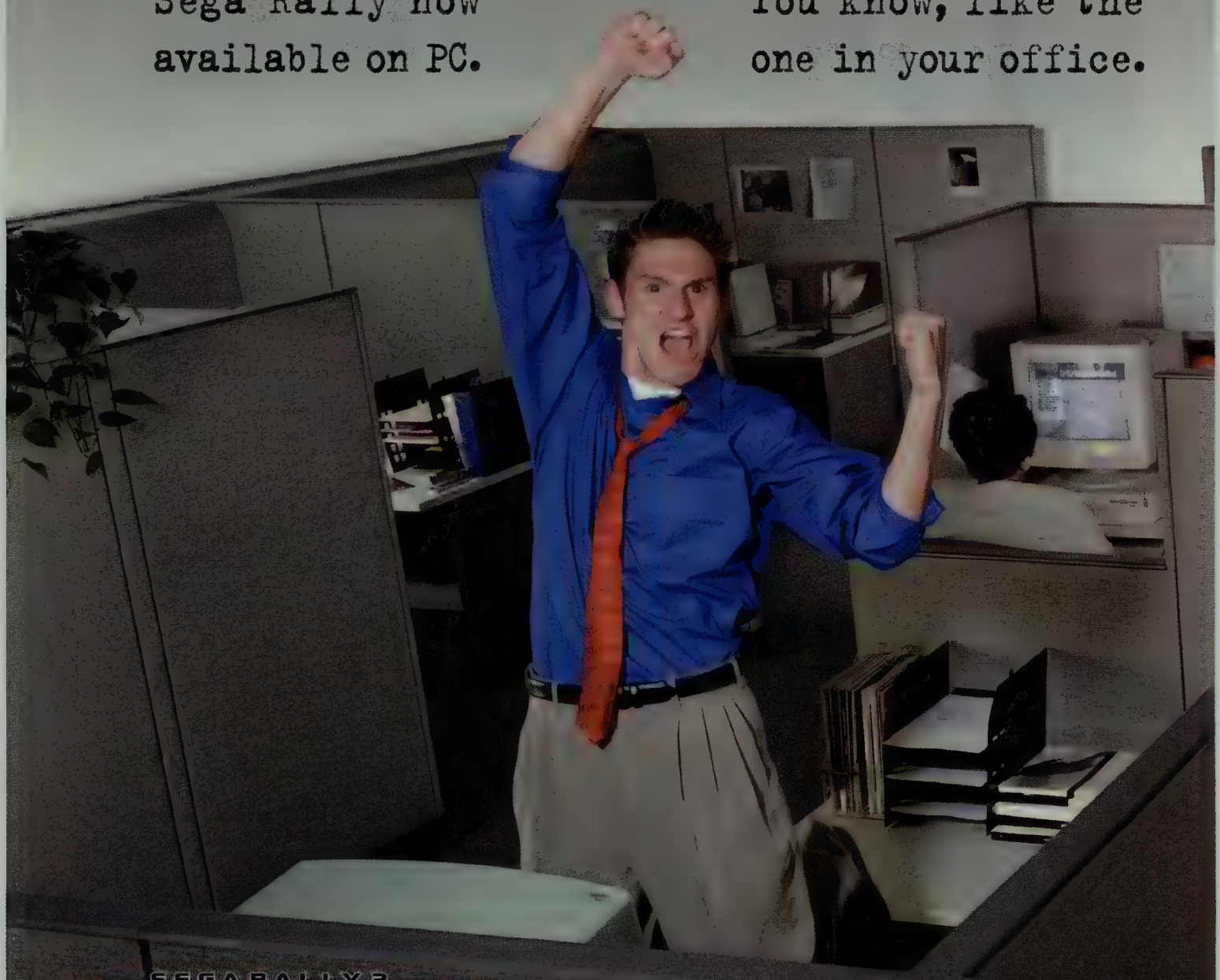
Monolith has hired Toby Ragaini, the creator of *Asheron's Call*. This should come as no surprise since Monolith has been interested in creating a persistent online world for quite some time. LithTech is currently working on an online-optimized version of their versatile game engine.

X-COM: Alliance has once again been delayed. Originally due out this November, the highly anticipated first-person team-based shooter is now slated to be released sometime in the year 2001. Why the delay? Internal shenanigans.

Electronic Arts has just revealed that it will be bringing out a special Collector's Edition of *Red Alert 2*. It will include a DVD with game art, behind-the-scenes footage, and re-mastered cut-scenes. The original *Red Alert*, a pewter figure, and an *RA2* soundtrack will also be in the package.

Sega Rally now available on PC.

You know, like the one in your office.



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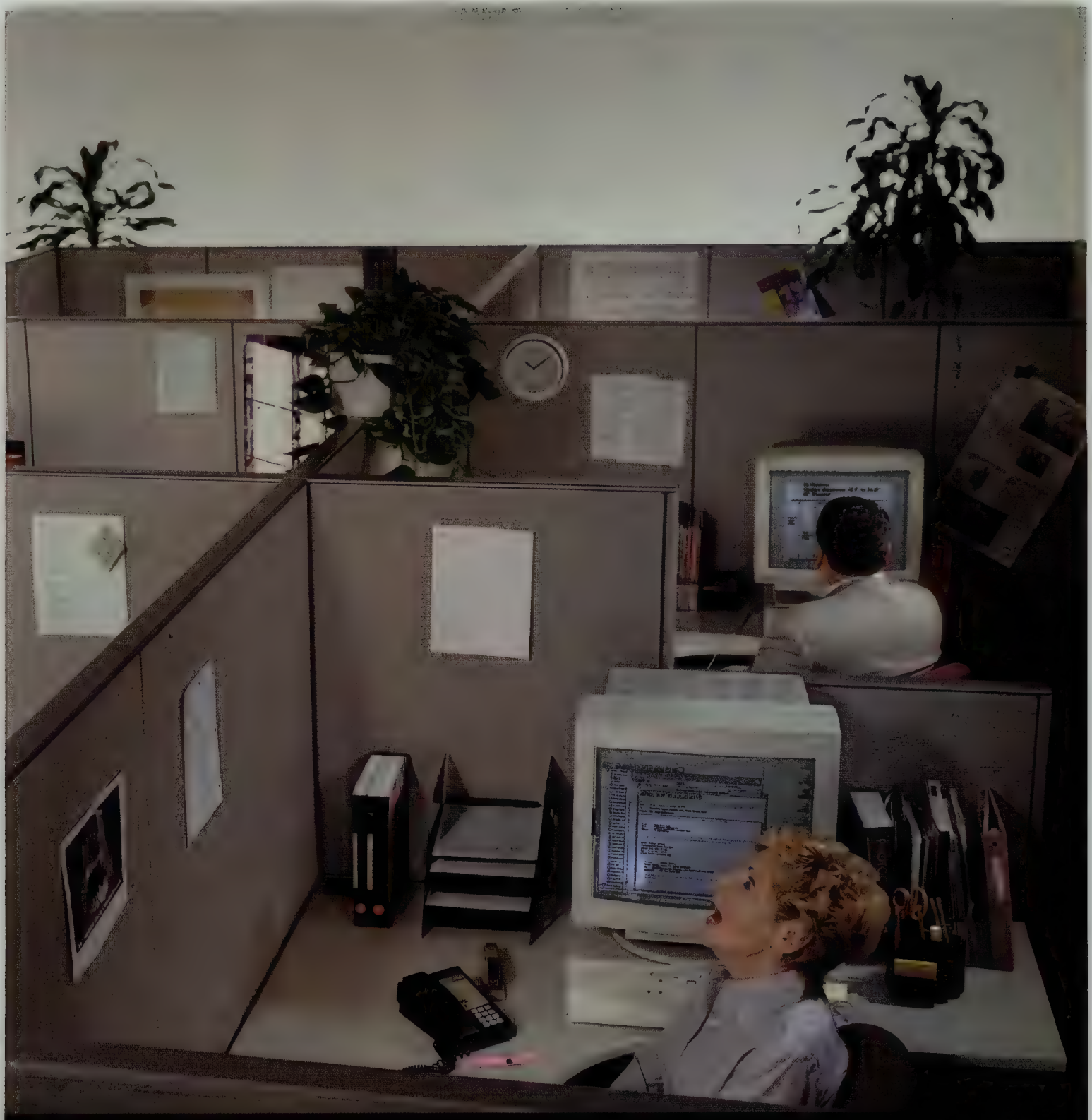
EVERYONE

E

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Sega's hottest racing game ever is now available on PC. Get ready for that road-chewing, dirt-spitting action you've come to expect. With a fully customizable car, you might even survive to see the checkered flag. Race the computer or challenge your friends over the Internet. And remember, if too much Sega Rally gets you fired from your job...it works great on home computers too.



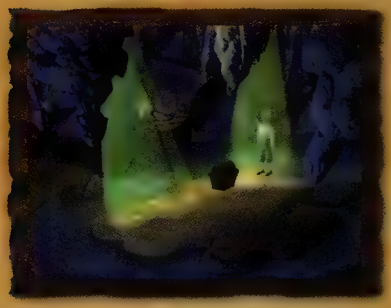
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Comic Mischief
Suggestive Themes
Use of Tobacco and Alcohol

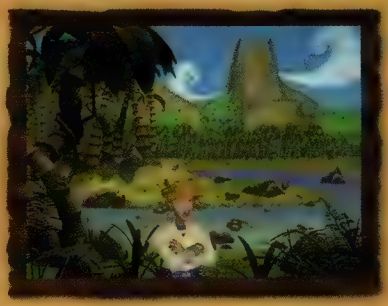
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LUCAS Arts

THE PCG RELEASE METER

Games, games, games! That's what it's all about. You know what the best thing about games is? There's always new ones on the way. Look on and drool. Please send all news of release dates to *laporte@gonegold.com*. Thanks to Rich for compiling the list for us. For the latest release dates, check out *www.gonegold.com*.





TITLE	PUBLISHER	DATE	PROGNOSIS
Arcatera	UbiSoft	10/04/00	Should be
Sea Dogs	Bethesda	10/04/00	Sails in later
Dino Crisis	Capcom	10/06/00	T-Ready!
F-18E Hornet Addition	Titus	10/06/00	On the ball
Combat Flight Sim 2	Microsoft	10/13/00	Should be landing now
Evil Dead: Hail to the King	THQ	10/13/00	Couple weeks more
Deep Space Nine: The Fallen	S&S	10/13/00	Way delayed
Zeus: Master of Olympus	Sierra	10/18/00	Gods say "yes"
Squad Leader	Hasbro	10/18/00	Affirmative
Wall Street Trader	Interplay	10/20/00	Bet on it.
Airline Tycoon	Interplay	10/20/00	No delays.
JetFighter IV	Talonsoft	10/21/00	Patchy skies
FIFA 2001	EA Sports	10/24/00	Kicks off
Age of Sail II	Talonsoft	10/24/00	Shore will
Blair Witch Episode 1	G.O.D.	10/25/00	Wickedly yes
C&C: Red Alert 2	Westwood	10/25/00	Red light
Links 2001	Microsoft	10/25/00	Greens are good
AOE2 Collectors Edition	Microsoft	10/25/00	Easy to make
Oni	Microsoft	10/26/00	Hai!
Sacrifice	Interplay	10/27/00	Dead ready
IHRA Drag Racing	Bethesda	10/27/00	Green light
Echelon	Bethesda	10/27/00	Lifting off
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Interplay	10/28/00	Hopefully
Kingdom Under Fire	G.O.D.	10/28/00	Right as rain
Tribes 2	Sierra	10/28/00	Target date
Gunman	Sierra	10/31/00	Approximate
Rune	G.O.D.	10/31/00	Strong possibility
4x4 Evolution	G.O.D.	10/31/00	Torqued and ready
STARS! Supernova	Empire	11/01/00	With a wish
Sheep	Empire	11/01/00	Abaaa-out now
Heroes Chronicles: Masters	3DO	11/01/00	Safe bet
Heroes Chronicles: Clash	3DO	11/01/00	Also a safe bet
Ford Racing	Empire	11/01/00	Off the line
F1 Championship 2000	EA	11/02/00	Checkered flag
B-17 Flying Fortress 2	Hasbro	11/02/00	Best Estimate
POD Racing 2	UbiSoft	11/01/00	Probable
Resident Evil 3	Capcom	11/02/00	Dead on
Chessmaster 8000	Learning Co.	11/03/00	Check
Riddle of the Sphinx	DreamCatcher	11/03/00	Sands say... maybe
Escape from Monkey Island	LucasArts	11/07/00	Hopefully
Legend of the Blademasters	Ripcord	11/08/00	Timed to the edge
Stunt GP	GT	11/08/00	Strong possibility
Conquest Frontier Wars	Microsoft	11/10/00	Bill's usually punctual
No One Lives Forever	FOX	11/10/00	Won't take forever
Reno Air Racing	Broderbund	11/14/00	Flight's on time
MechWarrior 4	Microsoft	11/14/00	Almost set in steel
Starfleet Command 2	Interplay	11/14/00	Highly probable
Call to Power 2	Activision	11/15/00	Heeding the call
Hitman: Codename 47	Eidos	11/15/00	Sneaks in
C&C: Renegade	Westwood	11/15/00	Pushed to next year
Delta Force: Land Warrior	NovaLogic	11/15/00	They're working hard
I'm Going In	Eidos	11/16/00	Probable
Heist	Interplay	11/17/00	Put money on it
Freedom: First Resistance	Redstorm	11/17/00	Rebel now!
Insane	Codemasters	11/21/00	On time
American McGee's Alice	EA	11/22/00	I'm late, I'm late!
Silent Hunter 2	Mindscape	11/24/00	Sinking a month
NBA Live 2001	EA Sports	11/28/00	On the buzzer
F1 Grand Prix	Eidos	11/30/00	Racing in

Ubi Lassos a Storm

Tom Clancy out, French in at Red Storm

In a move that's been anticipated for quite some time, UbiSoft has snatched up Red Storm Entertainment in a $45 million dollar deal. Negotiations for the deal started during this year's E3. Red Storm will now be a UbiSoft brand, meaning future Red Storm games will have the UbiSoft logo on their boxes. The popular development company has become a wholly owned subsidiary of UbiSoft, but will still operate independently of them.

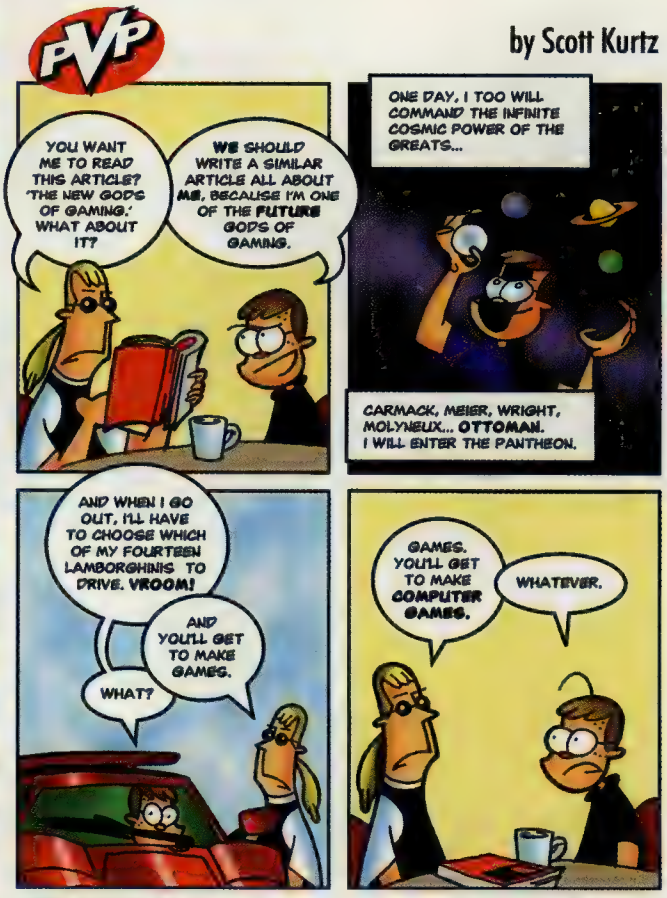
Tom Clancy, who was Chairman of the Red Storm Board, is no longer an owner of Red Storm Entertainment. However, he has signed an exclusive deal with UbiSoft and Red Storm and will continue to endorse their products. The first game to be published under the UbiSoft brand will be *Covert Ops*, the next title in the incredibly successful Rainbow Six series.



Covert Ops, the first game to be published under the UbiSoft label, should be out now.

As a result of the deal, Red Storm will also be taking over some existing UbiSoft PC products, the first of which is *Peacemakers*, a real-time strategy game.

This move is just another step in UbiSoft's plan to grow beyond consoles and its current target audience to become one of the world's top five publishers by the year 2005. Considering Red Storm's track record, they're definitely taking a step in the right direction.





Come Get Some

Someone out there thinks that Duke is best served up in small, bit-sized tidbits. World Entertainment Broadcasting Corp. has inked a deal with 3D Realms to create a batch of episodic Duke Nukem games. They are looking for a developer to create ten episodes to be released throughout 2001. Each episode will be between 15MB and 20MB in size. They will be stand-alone products and should contain between five and 20 hours of gameplay.

Each episode will be linked by a continuing storyline and will be made available through the Internet. Plans are for the first download to be free; after that, users have to pay around seven dollars per download.

Korea Knows How to (LAN) Party

Biggest tournament ever held in Yongin

Around the time this issue ships, hundreds, maybe even thousands, of gamers from around the world will be converging on Everland, the largest theme park in Korea. They'll be meeting to compete in the World Cyber Game Challenge. From October 7 to the 15th, these gamers will duke it out for $300,000 in prize money. The game events include *Quake III: Arena*, *Age of Empires II*, and *StarCraft: Brood War* (a big favorite in Korea). Samsung Electronics is the main sponsor, and the event itself is being organized by *Battletop.com*, an Internet ranking service in Asia. Hopes are for this tournament to become an annual event, with each one topping the last.

Gaming has really taken off in South Korea. *StarCraft* has sold more than one million units (heck, they even have a biweekly *StarCraft* show that broadcasts professional gamers playing the game for a viewing audience), and the South Korean Government is pledging to allocate the equivalent of $500 million dollars to create a game developing infrastructure within its borders. If things keep on this track, there's a good chance that we'll see some big things coming from Korea in the gaming world — one of the first exports into US waters is the GOD-published RTS, *Kingdom Under Fire* from developers Phantagram, due this fall. Unfortunately, there's no word on how gaming has affected North Korea, but then again, it's common knowledge that Communists don't know how to have fun.



In Korea, they love *StarCraft* so much that they even have *StarCraft* characters on packs of Cheetos.

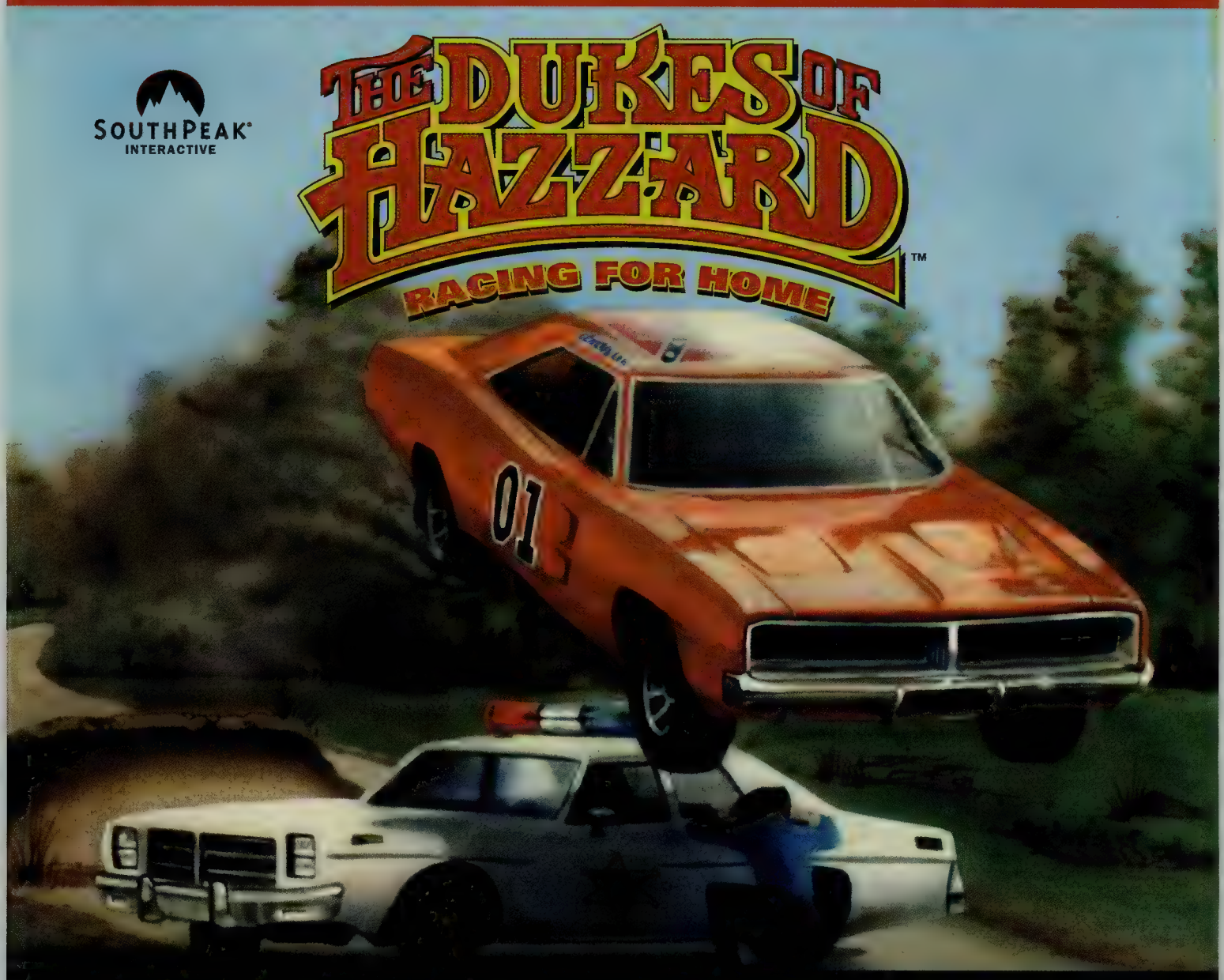


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Microsoft Gets Big and Huge

It's becoming a one horse race, as another development team joins the Seattle giant

There's been a lot of moving and shaking in the games industry lately. First UbiSoft buys Red Storm, now Big Huge Games signs an exclusive publishing deal with Microsoft. This means that the company founded by Brian Reynolds, known for his work on *Alpha Centauri* and *Civilization II*, will have its games published only by the big M.



Big Huge Games has joined Big Huge Microsoft

While the publishing giant is venturing into the console business, they want to assure PC gamers that they are still firmly committed to the PC platform. Ed Fries, Vice President of Microsoft Gaming Division, says that this move will, "show our continued commitment to PC gaming, by teaming up with the very best game developers out there."

The deal is especially sweet for Big Huge Games. As Brian Reynolds puts it, "There's a definite feeling that when you're published by Microsoft, you're playing in the big leagues." When we asked Reynolds why he decided to approach Microsoft, he says, "When I formed Big Huge Games, I had an idea I wanted a publisher that was willing to put forth the resources to do a game like the kind I wanted to do, and Microsoft was definitely on the top of that list." Big Huge Games is currently working on a real-time strategy game. Sadly, that's all we know about the game right now. All Reynolds will say is, "I'm getting to work on my dream game."

So does this mean that Big Huge Games will be working on X-Box games as well? Probably. Right now, Reynolds wants it to be clear that their first game will be developed for the PC first. However, this does not mean that it, or future Big Huge Games' projects, won't be ported to the X-Box.

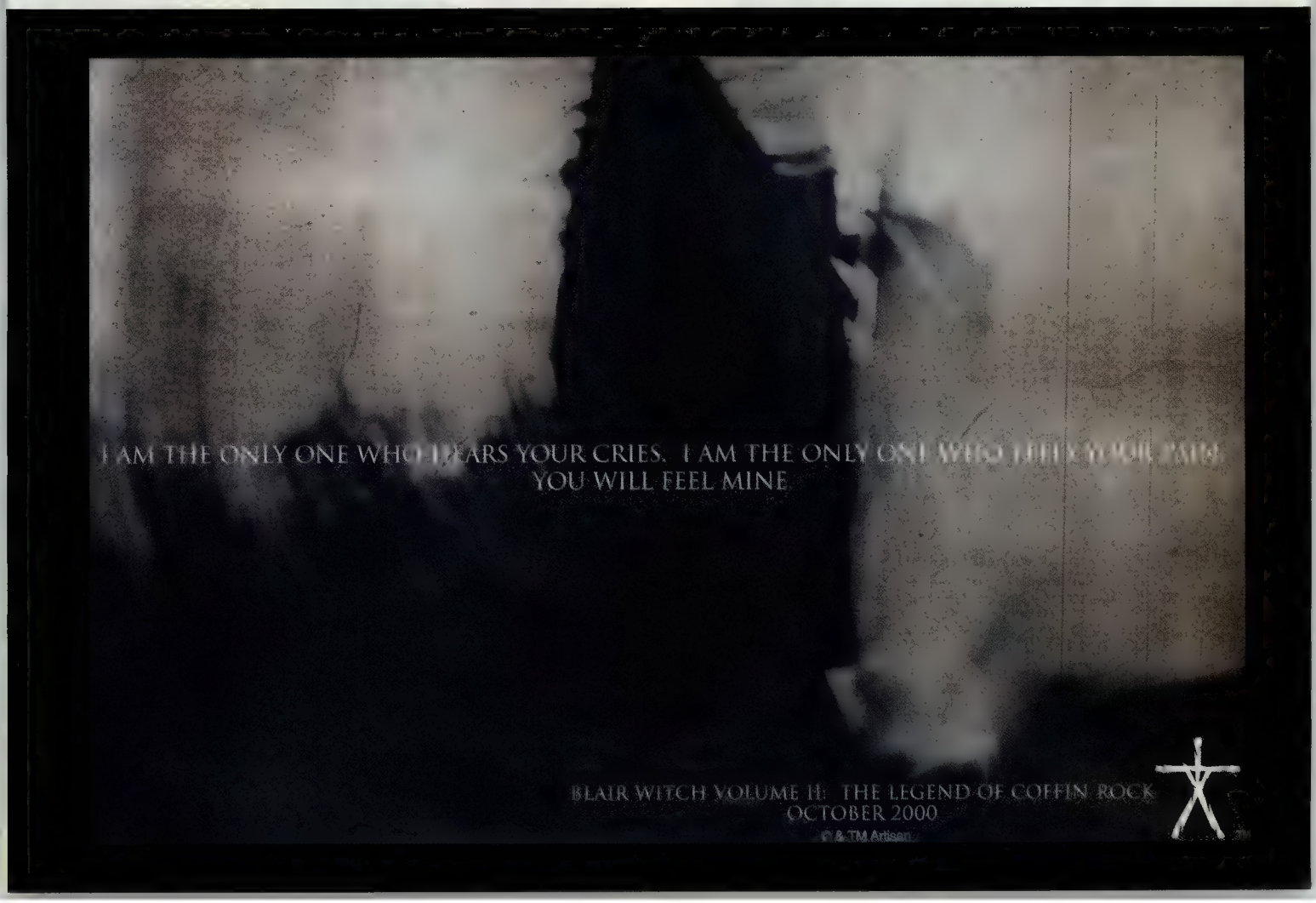
Regardless, this agreement shows just how much Microsoft believes in Reynolds' ability. Big Huge Games is not even a year old, and has yet to release a game. However, if Microsoft thinks that Big Huge Games is worth investing in, it's a safe bet that it has got something big up its sleeves.


Brian Reynolds has a lot to smile about.

GAMEOGRAPHY

Brian Reynolds knows games — here's a list of games he's worked on:

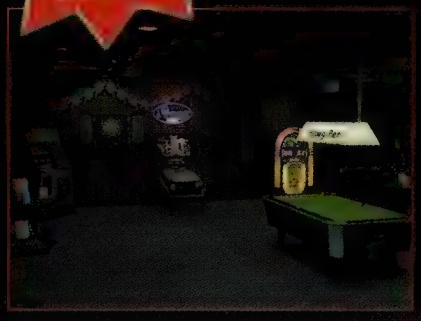
Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri (1999)
Sid Meier's Gettysburg (1997)
Sid Meier's Civilization II (1996)
Dragonsphere (1994)
Sid Meier's Colonization (1994)
Rex Nebular and The Cosmic Gender Bender (1992)



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PC screen shots shown.

The ultimate pool simulator is back and better than ever! Virtual Pool 3 featuring Jeanette Lee takes the award-winning and best-selling Virtual Pool series to the next level. Real-life physics, improved graphics and the chance to get beat by "The Black Widow", Jeanette Lee, make this the unquestionable choice in 3D pool simulators.

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WildTangent Snags Blizzard Talent

WildTangent, a start-up game outfit based in Seattle, WA, has announced the hiring of several veteran developers, among them a former *Diablo II* project director.

Phil Shenk was the lead artist and project leader on Blizzard's mega-hit sequel. Sanjay Bala-Krishnan is a long-time Sierra point man on games like *EarthSiege 2* and *Red Baron II*. Both have been given high-ranking positions within WildTangent; Shenk will head up the firm's RPG unit, while Bala-Krishnan will steer development on 3D shooters and sports games.

"Ours is a new business model, more online-focused, and it'll be significantly different from what they've done," says WildTangent spokesperson Paige Young. "It's important for us to get experts from their area to bring gaming experience along."

WildTangent is working on developing streaming 3D games over the Internet. The company was founded by Alex St. John, Microsoft's former DirectX chief.

DESIGN LAB

SIM SPY

BY: Chris Harrigan FROM: Greer, SC CATEGORY: Simulation

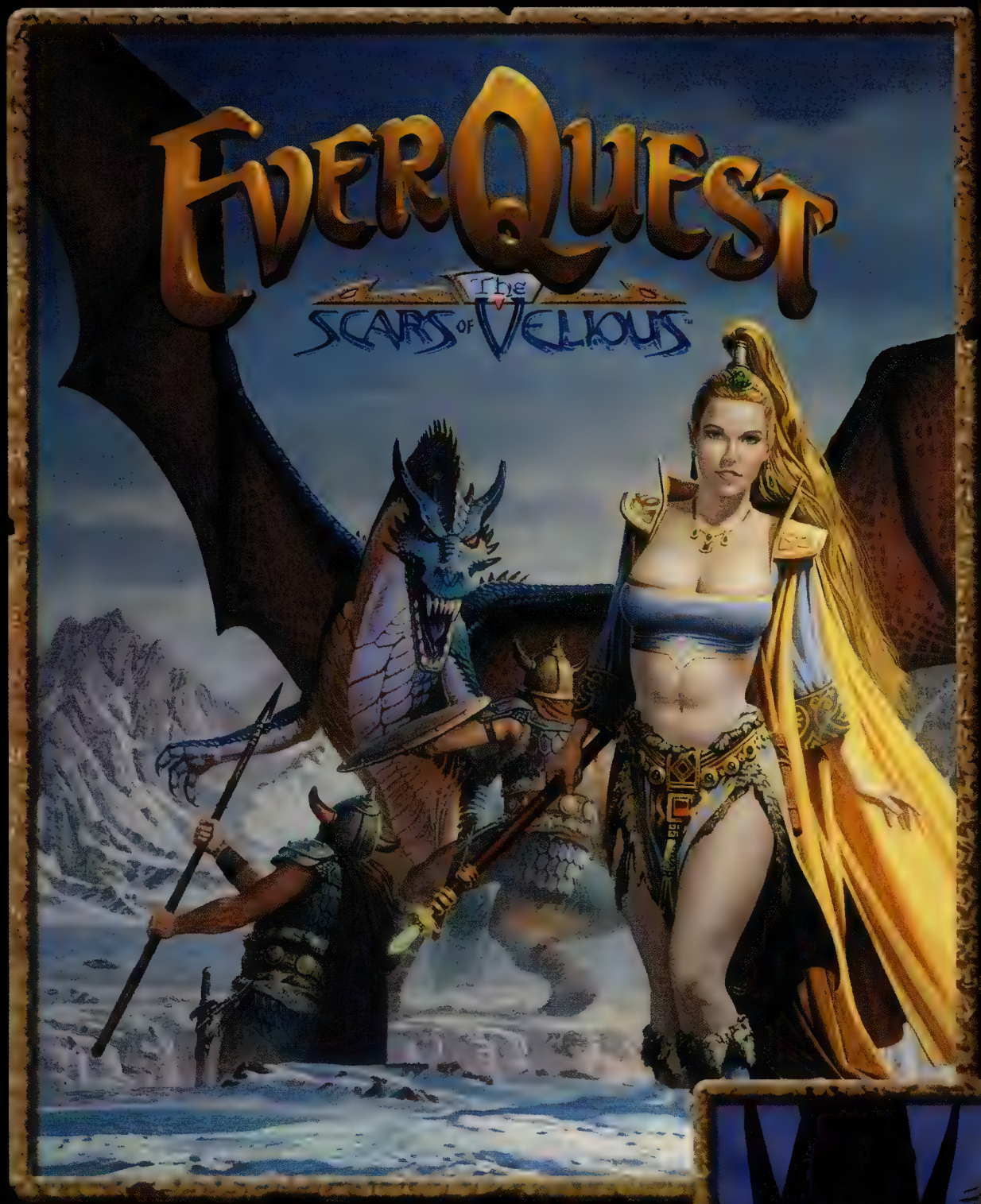
This game is centered on the life of a secret agent and will simulate the stress of the life of a spy. You control a single character in the first-person perspective that must lead a regular daily life so that his neighbors and foreign government officials won't get suspicious. You must go to work, converse with people, and even go to parties. It's similar to *The Sims*, only the focus is on the spy life.

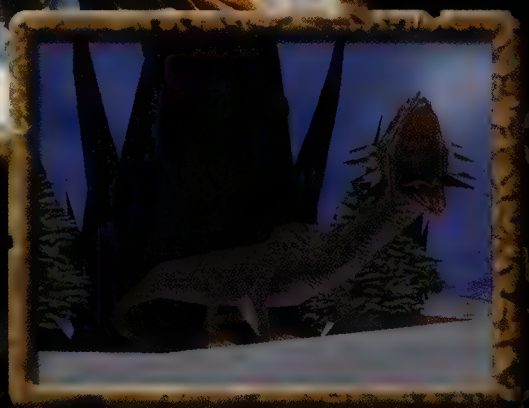


If you're looking for a current spy game, scour the bargain bins for Activision's under-rated *Spycraft*.

You have to carry out missions that your boss gives you. Since you still have a real life that you have to keep going, you must plan your missions carefully, considering your daily life so that you are not discovered. You'll have to succeed at creating a successful personal life and accomplish secret missions at the same time. The entire game takes place in one large city in which you can interact with anything. All of the people in the city carry on their lives, and will react realistically to your actions. You will gain skills as you advance in experience, which is earned with each mission that you take.







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GREAT GAMES YOU'VE NEVER PLAYED

Serious Sam

- Developer: Croteam
- Find it at: *www.croteam.com*

If you're not a regular denizen of the 'net, or if you're just a little slow, you may not have heard of *Serious Sam* (why didn't you read last month's Backspace column?). After an intriguing introduction to the gaming community (we're still not convinced that the game is actually real) this first-person shooter has got everyone talking about Croteam, the Croatian developer behind the tech demo focused around *Serious Sam*.

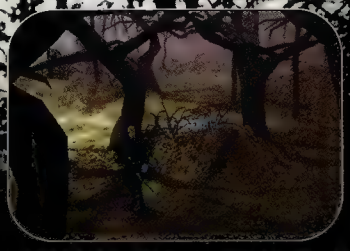
The game takes first-person shooters back to the days of *Doom*. The idea is to give you lots of targets to shoot at and plenty of ammo. You play Sam, otherwise known as Captain Sam "Serious" Stone of an elite commando group. Once again, the world is in trouble and humanity is on the brink of getting wiped out (we tend to get into that situation a lot). An evil being known as Tah-Um, or, Notorious Mental, has decided to kill every human being on Earth just for the fun of it (must be nearing his deadline). The only way for us puny humans to survive is to send Sam back to ancient Egypt to find a ship to get to Notorious Mental's planet and wreak pre-emptive revenge, or something to that effect.



Most of the weapons in *Serious Sam* have an Old West flavor to them, ranging from six-shooters to double-barreled shotguns.

What it all comes down to is that you get to kill weird aliens. Lots of them. And you get to do it all in the glorious new *Serious Sam* engine. This is what many gamers (along with designer Derek Smart, who reportedly has licensed the engine) have been drooling over. The *Serious Sam* engine is incredible. There are wide-open vistas, intricate interiors, incredibly detailed textures, and enough baddies on the screen at once to make you feel like you're in the middle of the million man march. The boys in Croatia have managed to create an engine that appears on par with the best that id Software has to offer. So head to *www. croteam.com* and see what *Serious Sam* is all about.


Blair Witch Volume I: Rustin Parr
Rustin Parr combines traditional adventure elements such as research, exploration and puzzle-solving with a healthy dose of heart-pounding action to create a frighteningly cerebral gaming experience.


Blair Witch Volume II: The Legend of Coffin Rock
Human Head Studios infuses the power of Nocturne™ technology with Resident Evil-style game play, making The Legend of Coffin Rock a uniquely satisfying romp through hell on Earth.


Blair Witch Volume III: The Elly Kedward Tale
The Elly Kedward Tale focuses on action and will feature a spell-based combat system.

BLAIR WITCH™

Gathering of Developers proudly announces a three-game series based on the rich mythology behind the blockbuster film, ***The Blair Witch Project***™. Haxan Films has granted unprecedented access to its wealth of intricate folklore, providing developers Terminal Reality, Human Head Studios and Ritual Entertainment with ample fodder for detailed and compelling storylines. These chilling narratives are powered by the awe-inspiring Nocturne™ engine, creating infinite opportunities for masterful suspense and blood-curdling realism.

TERMINAL REALITY™ humanhead™ ritual™ entertainment RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB GATHERING DEVELOPER™

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THE PCG PLAYLIST

We have awesome jobs. Free games, good hours, a great office environment, and access to all the latest that the world of PC gaming has to offer. What more could we want? We really want *Team Fortress 2* to be out already...and Li would really like a date with Denise Richards...but other than that, things are great at the *PC Gamer* offices!



ROB For the record, console games blow (apart from *Virtua Tennis*). Anyway, I really, really, really want to get to play *Deus Ex*. And *Star Trek: Elite Force*. But a quick hit of *Quake III* is as much as I can muster. Oh, that and taking a 4-0 kicking by Mike "PCXL" Salmon's Reds against my woefully managed Giants in our office world series.



LISA *The Sims: Livin' Large* is my obsession — I've created houses with themes from "Survivor" (Rich walks around naked) and *Star Trek*. I did recreate the *PCG* staff, but after one session of Greg peeing himself and Dan leaving garbage on the floor, I decided that those backstabbing jerks from "Survivor" were more fun.



DAN This month: firing up the tanks and laying down some artillery cover with the woefully under appreciated *Steel Panthers: World at War* that young Jeremy was kind enough to include complete and free of charge on a recent *PC Gamer CD-ROM*. Oh, and *Team Fortress Classic*. It will never get old.



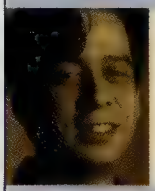
CHUCK Hello, I'm the new guy and I'm a *Quake III* whore. So, my spare office time was devoted to Rocket Arena and the new EA-designed maps (specifically Shady Towers). Even Dan's high-pitched taunting ("But it's so booooooring!) has no effect. And in my spare, spare time, I'm making my way through *Vampire* and *Deus Ex*.



LI I've been playing a lot of the *Tac Ops* mod for *Unreal Tournament*. It's basically *CounterStrike* for *UT*. I've also been the only person playing *Rocket Arena* for *Unreal Tournament*. Ever since Gaz left, the office has turned pro-*Quake (my influence is spreading — Rob)*. Now, I stand alone in my *UT*-loving ways.



JEREMY There comes a time in a man's life when taste turns humble, and he needs little more than jazz and a novel to remain balanced. Not me though, not this month. I require a steady supply of *Rocket Arena 3*. If I go home without it, I'm all jittery; worse than my girlfriend quitting cigarettes and coffee.



JOE Shackled to my chair again, I've been sneaking off and getting my daily fix of *Team Fortress Classic*. Oh sure, there are other games I've been playing: *CounterStrike, NHL 2000* (where's 2001, dammit?), *AOE II: The Conquerors*... Rob, can you unchain me so I can go to the bathroom? Or do I have to pee in the Dixie Cup again?



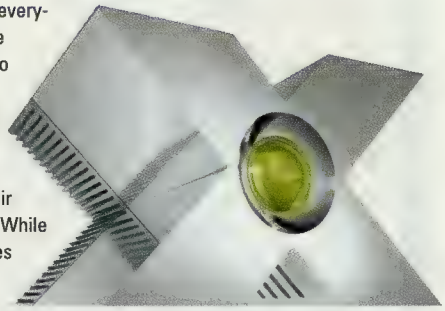
CHIAKI I just started playing *WarCraft II (on the <cough> Mac — Ed.)* and love it! It's good to be the master, making the little peons bend to my every command. Build, build...destroy, destroy! I also played a LAN game of *Age II* against some of the boys and found out the hard way that, as in real life, you can't trust your allies.



GREG This month I've gone back to playing a lot of *Age of Wonders*. I swear, it's one of the best PC games ever made. Sadly, I think it sold about twelve copies in the U.S. last year. If you're a fan of turn-based strategy, they don't get a heck of a lot better than this — see if you can't find a copy in your local bargain bin.

Jumping in the Box

More PC developers bed with X-Box



Money can't buy everything? Someone better tell that to Microsoft. The massive corporate conglomerate is making deals with big-time developers to ensure some serious talent for their upcoming console, X-Box. While most of the company names on their list of first-party developers are console-specific, a good deal of them have vast experience in the PC market.

Currently, Microsoft has signed deals with Totally Games (makers of the X-Wing series), Rainbow Studios (the folks behind *Motocross Madness*), Universal Interactive (console stuff), Stormfront studios (developers of *NASCAR Revolution*), Criterion Studios (developers of *TrickStyle*), and more.

Most of these deals are for the developers to create exclusive games for X-Box. But hardcore PC gamers need not worry. This does not mean that any of the companies above will stop creating PC games. While Peter Molyneux jumps aboard the X-Box bandwagon with gusto, his Lionhead company is spinning out a satellite studio called Black and White Studios devoted specifically to supporting his latest opus. It does mean that some development teams that would have targeted the PC for future games (such as KnowWonder Digital Media Works made up of former Cavedog *Amen* developers) are switching their attention to the console platform; but Microsoft head honcho Ed Fries continues to assert that the PC will retain its own development and market space within the mighty Microsoft empire.

Skin It



When Jeremy Williams came back from one of his many trips abroad, he returned with some of the slickest T-shirts we've ever seen. Thanks to *www.game-skins.com*, you can wear shirts that sport logos like anger.cfg, I hate campers, and LPB. Like what we always do when we find a cool product, we're giving away free game-skin shirts. Just give us an E-mail at *eyewitness@pcgamer.com* with "Skin it!" in the subject heading by November 30, 2000, and we'll randomly pick ten lucky winners.

CONTEST RULES

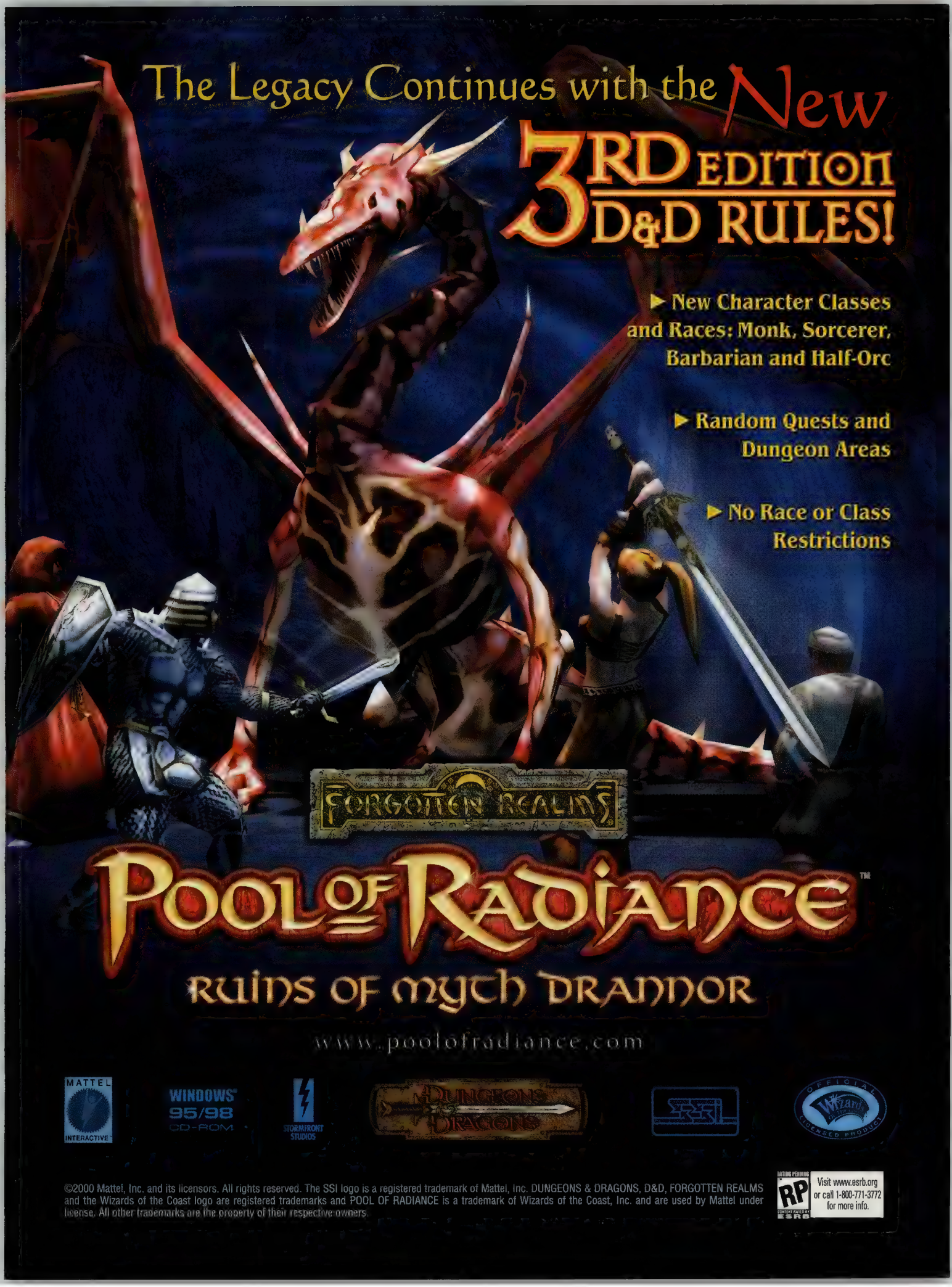
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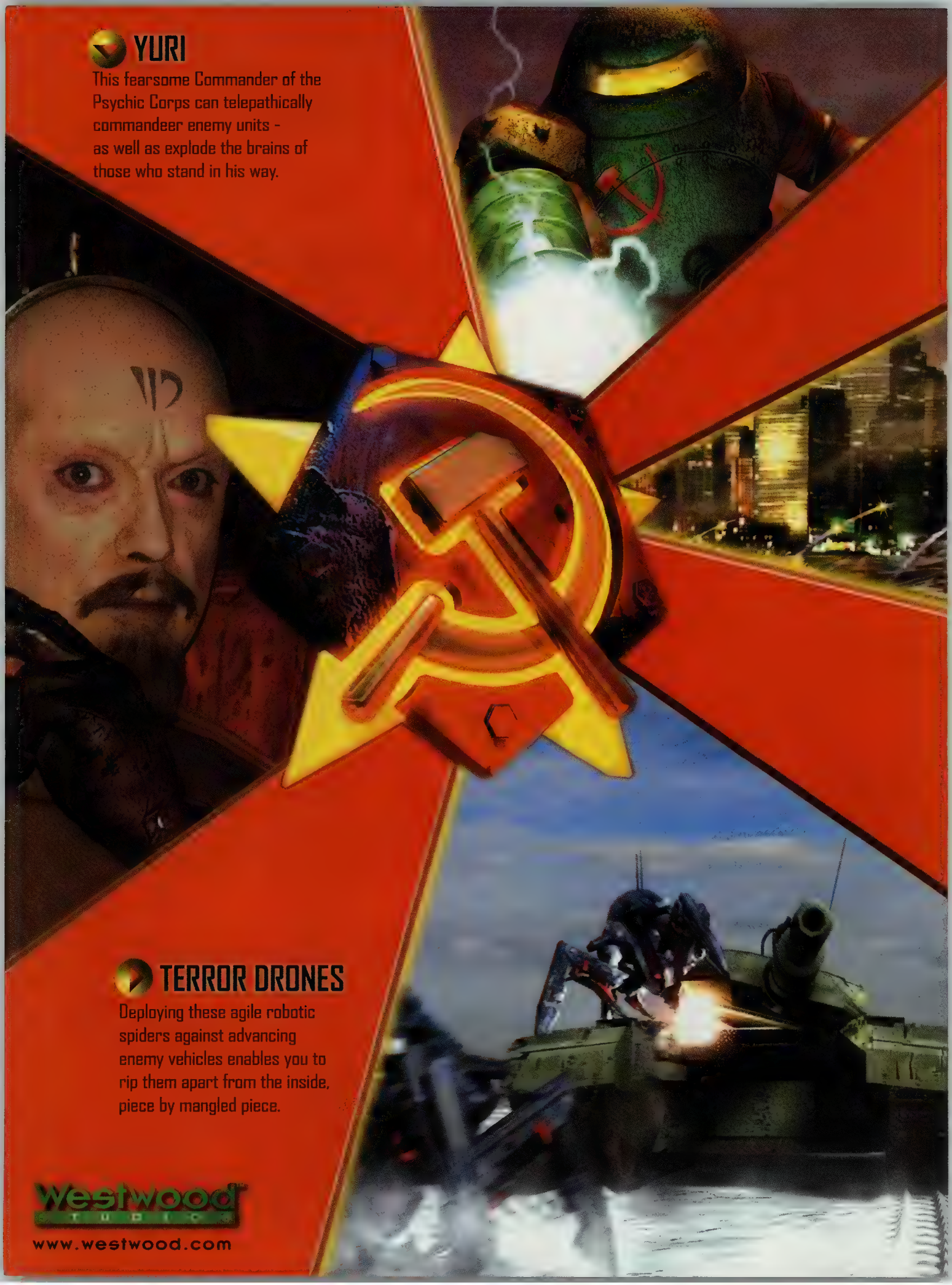
NEXT MONTH

Massively Multiplayer Games Explode

So you've heard about these massively multiplayer games. Perhaps you're one of the 300,000 registered *EverQuest* players. Maybe you're old school and have been inhabiting *Ultima Online* since day one. There's even a chance you have heard *Asheron's Call*. With these three games, it's easy to assume that massively multiplayer online gaming means AD&D knock-offs for the socially impaired. Not true. We reveal a bunch of persistent world games prepping for primetime, including RTS games, war games, and even a first-person shooter.

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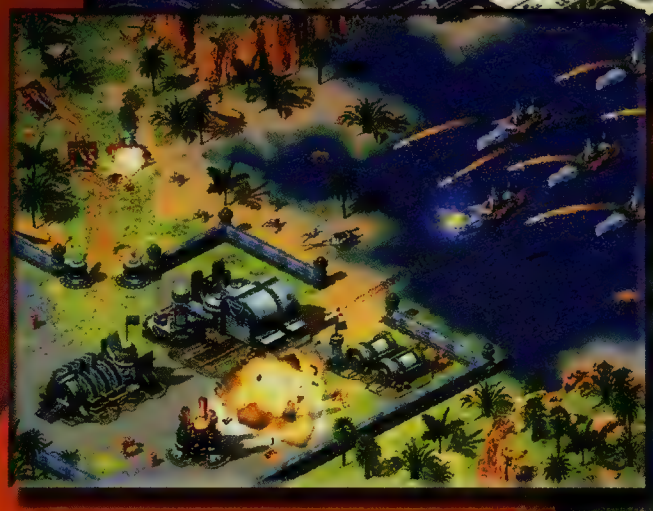

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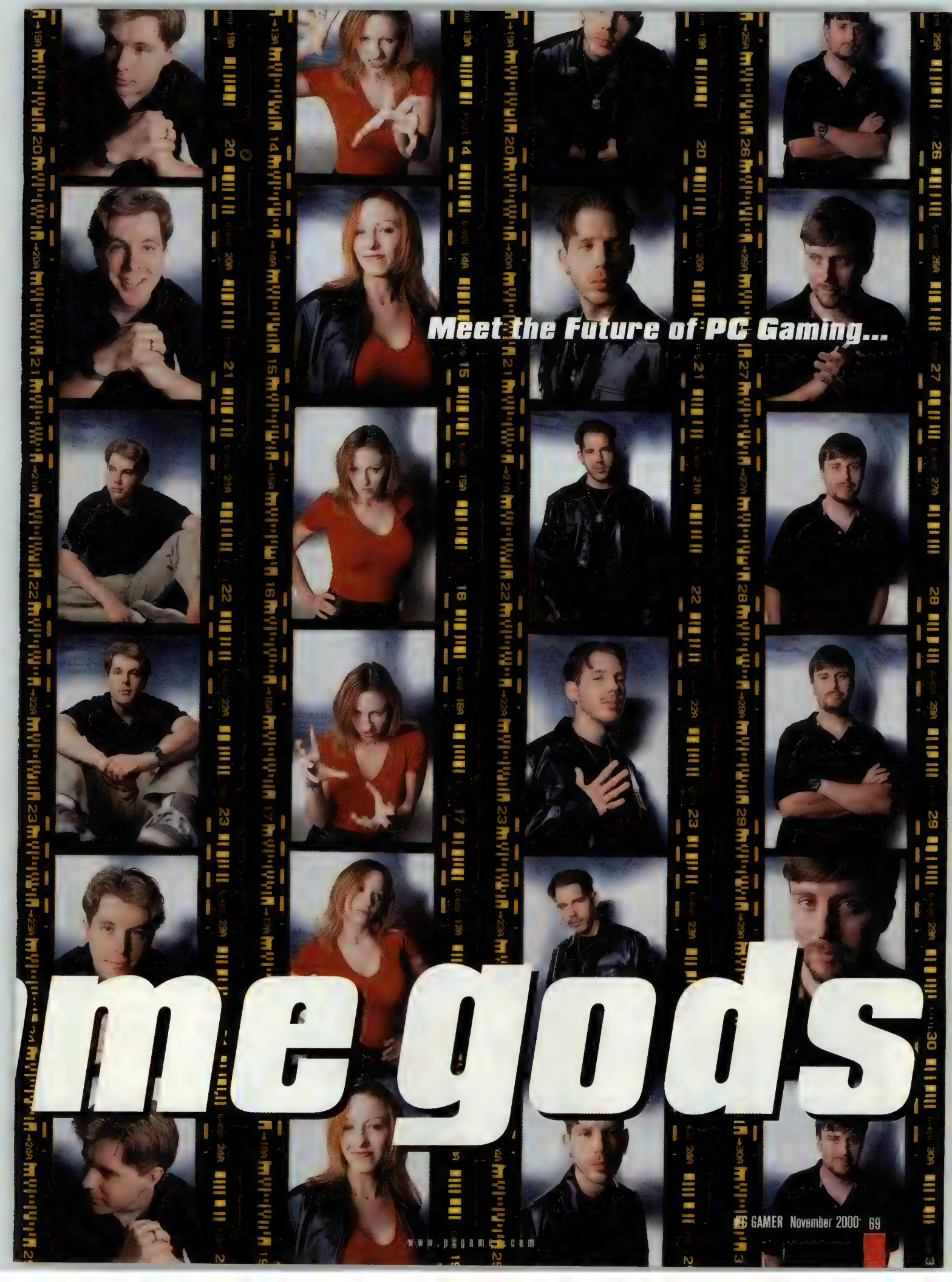
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Meet the Future of PC Gaming...
me gods

A year ago, *PC Gamer* introduced you to a group of men and women we called Game Gods: 25 extraordinary gamemakers who can easily be considered legends in the industry. While most — such as John Carmack, Will Wright, and Sid Meier — are still very active doing what they do best, some have left the gaming world behind, leaving a noticeable void in their absence. Who could ever possibly replace them? Can they be replaced?

It's all about potential. We've put together a list of 10 artists who we feel have the best chance of one day becoming industry legends in their own right. Some are already famous; a few may even be considered infamous. Some have only one game to their credit, and others have started their own development houses. Each, however, has that certain something, the hallmark of fame, that should see them walk proudly with the original Game Gods.

This August, we were lucky enough to get eight of them together in one place and eavesdrop on an amazing, once-in-a-lifetime meeting: a four-hour no-holds-barred discussion of how they got where they are, the future of the game industry, and even you, the fans. It was, without doubt, the most exciting day in our lives as game editors and we're proud to share it with you.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GET A JOB IN THE GAME INDUSTRY?

CLIFF: "Well, there's two ways that people usually get in — the QA (Quality Assurance) or customer support way — and then people who just make content, promote it on the web, or actually just start making it, and they're contracted to do it. In three words Tim Sweeney [Epic Games' lead programmer] summed it up: Make cool shit. I mean, if you have talent, you will get hired because it's hard to find talent. It's not like there's a big surplus of people floating around."

ED: "It's hard to find non-jaded talent..."

CLIFF: "Yeah, that too."

ED: "...People who haven't developed way too big of an ego for their talent or are so burnt on this industry that 50 percent of what they produce is just bitterness."

KEN: "Find somebody who's great and stick to them like glue. Like I was fortunate to have Doug Church, who is one of the unsung geniuses of the industry and created *Ultima Underworld* and *System Shock*. I got put in a room with him for six months to start work on *Thief*. You can really, really learn. The other mistake newcomers make is they don't really understand what production's like and what development's like, and the trade-offs that are necessary. They just want to do cool shit, and they don't want to do cool shit on a budget or on a timeframe."

BRAD: "I think there's a lot of neat ideas out there, and you get E-mails or you talk to people about the neat ideas; but what really impresses someone in a position to hire people is the persistence to get something done."

STEVIE: "There's all these expectations that a twenty year old kid is going to walk in and get a six figure salary and not have to work a lot of hours. And when you start, you have to be prepared to work hardcore hours for next to nothing, because that's how just about everybody starts. Some people get lucky and walk into a good deal, but most everybody else works up from QA. I was the lowest paid person when I started at Ion Storm out of a hundred people — the lowest paid, and I just used my free time, I did everything extra I could, I offered to help, I was learning level design, learning to write strategy guides, all this extra stuff. And if you put in the extra effort, they see that and move you up."

AMERICAN: "That's the same thing I did at id. I started answering the phones and went from that to writing code, doing levels, doing sound effects, making music, I mean just everything and anything I could get my hands on I would take over and do the best thing I could with it. That's the other thing — lose your need for sleep. For the first year and a half that I was there, I wouldn't sleep more than four or five hours a day. Just go."

STEVIE: "Be there longer than everyone else."

AMERICAN: "Be there when they get there and be there when they go home."

KEN: "Be there when the opportunity's going to come up."



Front row (left to right):
AMERICAN MCGEE
Electronic Arts
STEVIE CASE
Ion Storm
ALEX GARDEN
Relic Entertainment

Back row (left to right):
BRAD MCQUAID
Verant Interactive
CLIFF BLESZINSKI
Epic Games
ED DEL CASTILLO
Liquid Entertainment
KEN LEVINE
Irrational Games
ROBIN WALKER
Valve Software

PHOTOS BY KAREN MOSKOWITZ



"If there's one message I like to get across to people, I like them to really and truly embrace [the fact that] anything that your imagination can conceive of is possible."

— ALEX GARDEN

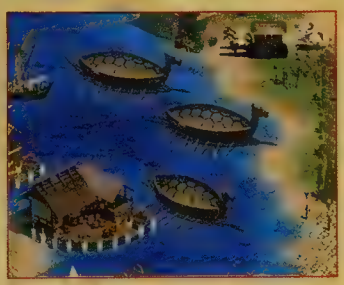
ALEX GARDEN

- WHO: Founder/CEO of Relic Entertainment
- AGE: 25
- THE BUZZ: *Homeworld*, *Homeworld*, and, did we mention, *Homeworld*, too?
- WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: He wants you to know he didn't make the game by himself.
- CURRENT PROJECT: *Sigma*, an "Island of Dr. Moreau" meets *C&C*-style RTS where units are created by amalgamating animals.
- HOW HE GOT STARTED: "Don Mattrick gave me a chance to get involved as a tester at Distinctive Software, where I met some great people and had a chance to really develop my love for this industry."
- INFLUENCES: "Peter Molyneux, Chris Taylor, Don Mattrick, Warren Spector, George Lucas, Ayn Rand, Star Wars, *Battlestar Galactica*, *The Muppets*, Shigeru Miyamoto, Section Z."

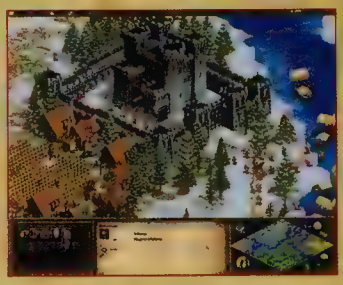
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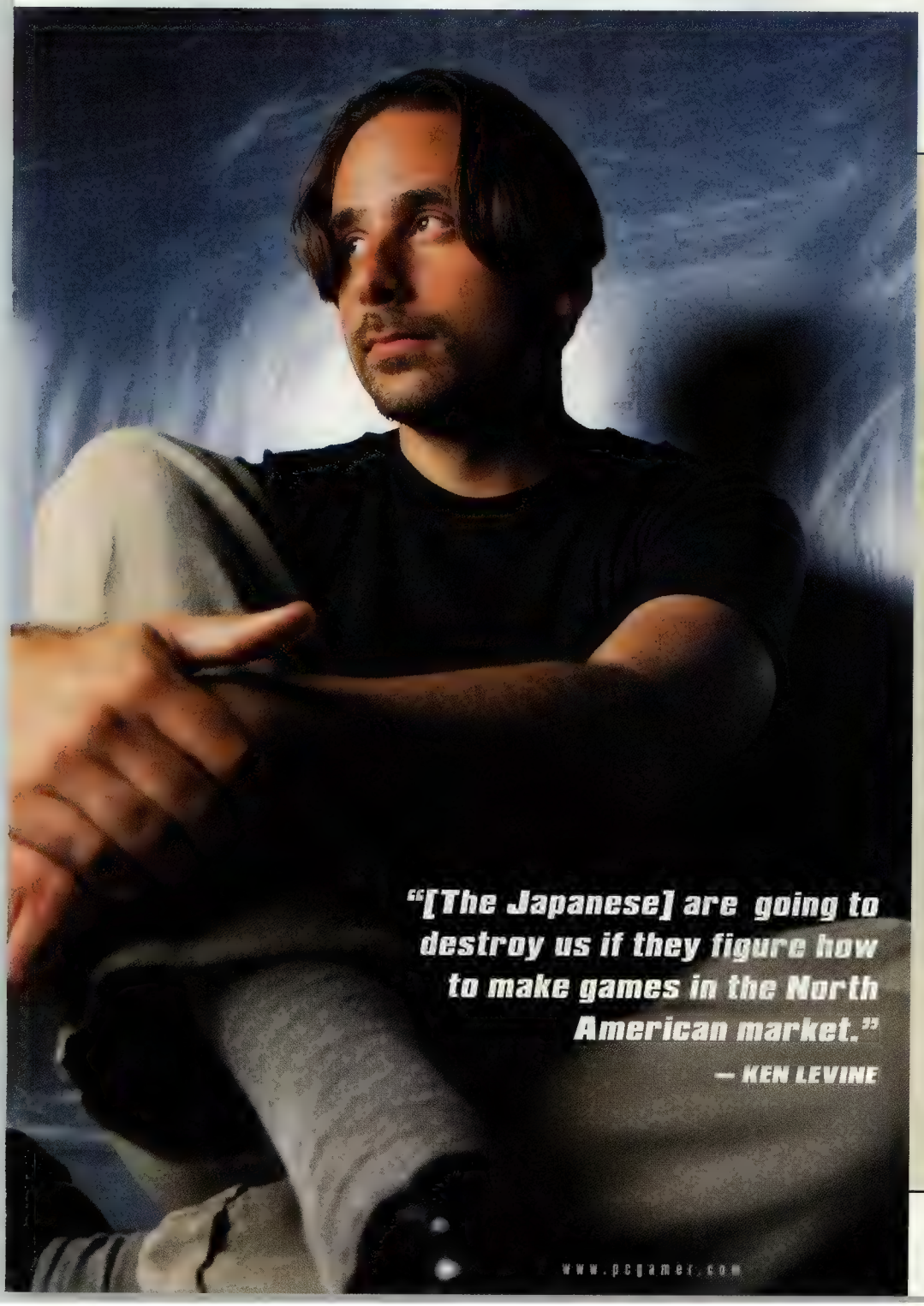
ED: "I think that at its core, every piece of entertainment is about striking an emotional chord in a player, whether that emotion is self-generated or pre-generated for you. I mean, that's what movies are about, that's what television is about, that's what reading a really good book is about. When you play *StarCraft*, you feel a sense of pulse-pounding frenzy. When you play *Quake* or *Doom*, you feel the same kind of thing. It's the emotion that gets elicited that I believe is what draws the player into it."

KEN: "I think one of the best storytelling elements I've ever seen in a computer game is the guy in the black suit in *Half-Life*. He doesn't say anything. He doesn't do anything. There's no dialogue tree with him. He's just there. And you get what he's there for, and he makes you nervous. And it tells you there's something going on that you don't know about, which brings up a feeling of anxiety."

ROBIN: "We [Valve Software] get more E-mail about that character than almost any other character, and yet he appears, I think, six times in the game. You know, some people criticize *Half-Life* by saying it has a very weak story. And you'll never hear anyone say, 'Oh, no, it has a strong story.' What it does is convey it in a new way. We didn't want to cut the player out. The story's conveyed to him, and he never loses control of his character. We're not just telling a story anymore. We're trying to let players live it."

AMERICAN: "I think the thing I loved the most about that game was the emotion that it elicited. That was the first time, when I shot the first scientist, I ever felt sadness and guilt that I had done something wrong in the world inside of a video game. I was like, 'Shit, why did I do that?'"

CLIFF: "See, that's a great point because characters aren't quite realistic yet, but I think once we start moving in that direction,



"[The Japanese] are going to destroy us if they figure how to make games in the North American market."

— KEN LEVINE



KEN LEVINE

- **WHO:** General Manager/ Founder of Irrational Games
- **AGE:** 34
- **THE BUZZ:** Worked on *Thief* and designed and wrote *System Shock II*
- **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:** Used to be a playwright and screenwriter in L.A. (But we won't hold that against him, will we?)
- **CURRENT PROJECT:** Creative Director of *Freedom Force*
- **HOW HE GOT STARTED:** "Worked in the film industry for a while and [then] applied for a job at Looking Glass."
- **INFLUENCES:** Doug Church (of *Ultima Underworld* and *System Shock*)
- **FIRST GAME PLAYED:** *Star Trek* on a mainframe computer in 1976
- **ON *FREEDOM FORCE*:** "Set in New York City circa 1962, *Freedom Force* is a tactical roleplaying game that bristles with the over-the-top action of the comic books. It's up to you to form and lead your Freedom Force, a team of superheroes capable of standing toe-to-toe against insane villains who are hell bent on crimes that range from bank robbery to world domination!"



"I spent the next week or so in a funk not wanting to make games anymore."

— AMERICAN McGEE

ON SEEING DOOM LINKED TO THE COLUMBINE TRAGEDY



AMERICAN McGEE

- **WHO:** Level Designer/Director at EA
- **AGE:** 27
- **THE BUZZ:** Ex-id guy; "That's not his real name, right?"
- **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:** Yes, that's his real name.
- **CURRENT PROJECT:** Director of *Alice*, a first-person action/adventure using the *Quake III* engine loosely based on "Alice in Wonderland."
- **HOW HE GOT STARTED:** "It was just sheer dumb luck."
- **INFLUENCES:** "Movies and literature…[Lewis] Carroll, Tim Burton, Ed Gorey, that kind of thing."
- **FIRST GAME PLAYED:** "Probably on the Odyssey. Before that, *Tempest*."

you'll see more and more people, possibly even more women, playing games because you're going to look at these emotions."

KEN: "We've been criticized as an industry for portraying a lot of violence in games. We do that not because we're particularly violent, but because…"

CLIFF: "It's how you tell stories."

AMERICAN: "We've actually developed an entire massive backstory of the reason *Alice* is in this version of Wonderland but we never tell it to you, ever. And it's just something you have to get through the game and when you get to the very, very, end, you're supposed to have that epiphany moment where you go, 'now I get it!' We're not allowing people to know what's going on, but we're hoping there's a few people out there smart enough to get it."

ALEX: "That's a huge risk because people are really stupid. Do you guys remember the old Ultimas? They did it the best. They said, 'Tell me about yourself,' and the questions are so ambiguous there's no way you can know what you're answering and no way you can shape your character. That was brilliant."

PCs VERSUS CONSOLES

CLIFF: "We have a lot to learn from consoles. With *Mario 64* you start off, and all you can basically do is run, and that's it. By the time you finish, it's a monstrously complex product."

KEN: "I look at games like *Zelda* and think, 'Good sweet mother of Christ.' It is perfect. I'm sure [Shigeru] Miyamoto thinks there are a hundred things he could improve, but as far as I'm concerned, it's a perfect product for its time. When that eyeball blinked at the very end, three seconds of FMV convinced me I'll never be able to compete, ever. The thing is, and what pisses me off — we're all good at what we do, okay? None of us have made *Superman (the N64 travesty — Ed.)* and our

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publishers need to make money, but how are we supposed to compete? If the Japanese decide to get serious about this, they are going to destroy us if they figure how to make games in the North American market."

CLIFF: "I'm real interested to see if any of these console guys can pull off online gaming well, and if the casual gamer will embrace it, because you can't patch a console game."

BRAD: "We're working on a massively multiplayer PlayStation 2 game [*EverQuest*], and there are definitely a lot of questions: how do you patch, how do you communicate with others without a keyboard? I think it will end up being a very different game. Our first idea was to just port *EverQuest* to a console. It's like, no, we can take the same world and the same name but it's not going to be the same game."

CLIFF: "I find it very disturbing going from the PC to the console and to have to be Sony's bitch; to have to have Sony approve the things that we do. It's upsetting for me to submit it for their approval process."

KEN: "The developer contract says, 'Note: This contract is non-negotiable.' I've never seen that before, but they're Sony. What are you going to do?"

ALEX: "Bend over and like it."

GAMES, VIOLENCE, AND CENSORSHIP

CLIFF: "I don't think government should be involved in regulating any content, period."

KEN: "If you look at this deal with [Senator Joseph] Lieberman right now and the whole ratings for [games] — that's pretty scary. The problem is, we're going to end up being the scapegoat for the motion picture industry. We're going to get all the flack. The average kid sees something like 6,000 murders on TV by the time they're six years old. You're trying to tell me that we're desensitizing kids to violence by playing a game like *Quake* where you're running and blowing up demons? Give me a goddamn break."

ED: "The real issue is that we're shirking the true responsibility. We're not spending



"I have a guy brain. I do my own thing. For that, those people hate me, unfortunately."

— STEVIE CASE
ON "TRADITIONAL" GIRL GAMERS



STEVIE CASE

- **WHO:** Level designer at Ion Storm
- **AGE:** 24
- **THE BUZZ:** Worked on the ill-fated *Daikatana* (with the scars to show for it).
- **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:** She's completing her degree in Business and is a hardcore gamer.
- **CURRENT PROJECT:** A secret project at Ion Storm.
- **HOW SHE GOT STARTED:** Beat John Romero in a *Quake* challenge match.
- **EARLIEST GAME MEMORIES:** "I have these memories of riding on the back of the bus and bragging about how fast I had beaten *Mario 2*."
- **FIRST GAME PLAYED:** "*Lode Runner* on an Apple II!"



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enough time worrying about family and home because all those values begin in the home. That's where it starts. I was surrounded by an awful lot of really bad stuff, but I had a really good family."

ALEX: "What's so bizarre is nobody is noticing how viral those shootings were. Last spring there were three or four of them in a row. And now there's been nothing since, so have people gotten less crazy in the last year? Have the games become less violent?"

ED: "The core problem we're having in this society is that we're blaming — to use the NRA quote: 'guns don't kill people; people kill people.' I could kill people in this room with the pencil I'm holding, but it's really not the pencil that I'm holding that's to blame. It's the rage or frustration that I carry within."

AMERICAN: "As far as accountability, the first time I saw the Columbine news I was coming off a plane and I looked up at the TV monitors and saw the shootings and it was instantly, 'That's horrible.' Then the next frame was a picture of the *Doom* box and that almost destroyed me. I spent the next week or so in a funk not wanting to make games anymore. We're not any more responsible than someone who creates a film or makes a movie."

BRAD: "I think I agree with that, but I'll play a little devil's advocate. We're creating these things, and for most normal people it's not a problem, but for a few people who have issues — you can say it's their problem. But let's say they're an alcoholic and you give them a beer: Who's fault is it that he's an alcoholic?"

STEVIE: "It all has to come back to personal responsibility. There are millions of people in the world, and we create entertainment. We're not responsible for raging kids. People have to be responsible for themselves. I think ratings are a good thing. The problem comes in when you start censoring or not allowing content. Ratings are great because they allow parents to decide what their kids should play, and that is what they should be doing."

ALEX: "The truth is, society is like Darwinian evolution; it's got to be responsible for its own survival. We're part of it like anyone else is, and I just think it's a mistake for anybody to point a finger or say we have to do certain types of games or not. There just shouldn't be any rules associated with it."

ED: "My response is that I do feel responsible. I have no interest in making pornography in a game, and that's just a personal thing, and I think it's a personal line we walk every day. I think that's part of what we do, and any person who makes entertainment has to decide on a daily basis how much they cater to the lower forms of human drive and how much they cater to the higher forms of human drive."

WOMEN AND GAMING

STEVIE: "I think at a very basic level, it comes down to how we are socialized as children. Growing up, I had great parents, but I still wasn't encouraged to examine technology and learn about computers. That's unfortunate. I think so many girls have that experience. They're brought up, and their dads are buying them the Barbie computer game. It's something, but it's not hardcore. [Intimidation is] a big thing. I've never been the intimidated type of person but when I saw *Quake* and *Doom*, it was a little intimidating. It's tough to pick up; it's tough to learn. It's violent. It's not that I didn't like that; I just felt a little intimidated by that. I think so many girls do. I've gotten a lot of E-mails from girls who said they've heard about me or other female players playing, and they tried Quake finally because their boyfriend convinced them to. They loved it. It was just stepping over the first hurdle of getting them started, and then once they get going, they like it just like anyone else does."

CLIFF: "The number one way to alienate a person is to make them feel stupid. It is two or three times worse with females from my experience. I don't mean to generalize, but a guy will try to play a game and get over the learning curve and if he gets his ass kicked and feels stupid, he'll stick with it more often. I honestly think by having more women playing games you're going to eventually wind up with more women making games. How did we all wind up where we are right now? We were playing games and that drove us to want to make them."

ED: "One of the trends I've noticed is women tend to be, perhaps because of their upbringing, stronger at community building. Every single time I see a woman who really digs a game she gets her circle of friends to play and that circle expands and they start talking to each other about the game."

ALEX: "I try to stay away from it but genetically, it's a deep down part of who we are. I don't think it's just a social experience."

STEVIE: "I don't know if I agree with that."

AMERICAN: "The social comes from genetics. I think we're a reflection of society and the whole civilization."

STEVIE: "I agree there is a certain level of genetic input but I think the socialization is the bigger factor. I feel strongly about that."

BRAD: "I think it's a reflection of the genetics, but then it goes too far sometimes. It gets to be too much of a stereotype."

FROM THE MOUTHS OF GODS

WILL WRIGHT



Of the new crop of developer talent, who would you pick as an up and coming "game god"?
I guess I'd pick Alex Garden. I don't know him at all, so I'm picking him from just two data points.
1. I thought *Homeworld* was just a brilliant game. I was especially impressed with its ratio of elegant simplicity to rich and rewarding gameplay.
2. His new game (*Sigma*) seems to be totally different from his last one. It's so easy to fall into a rut of doing the same basic game over and over. So I really appreciate his exploratory risk-taking.

If you could give them some advice, what would it be?
I really don't think he [Alex Garden] needs any advice from me.

What are you working on now?
I'm working on two projects right now. One is *The Sims Online*, the other is top secret.

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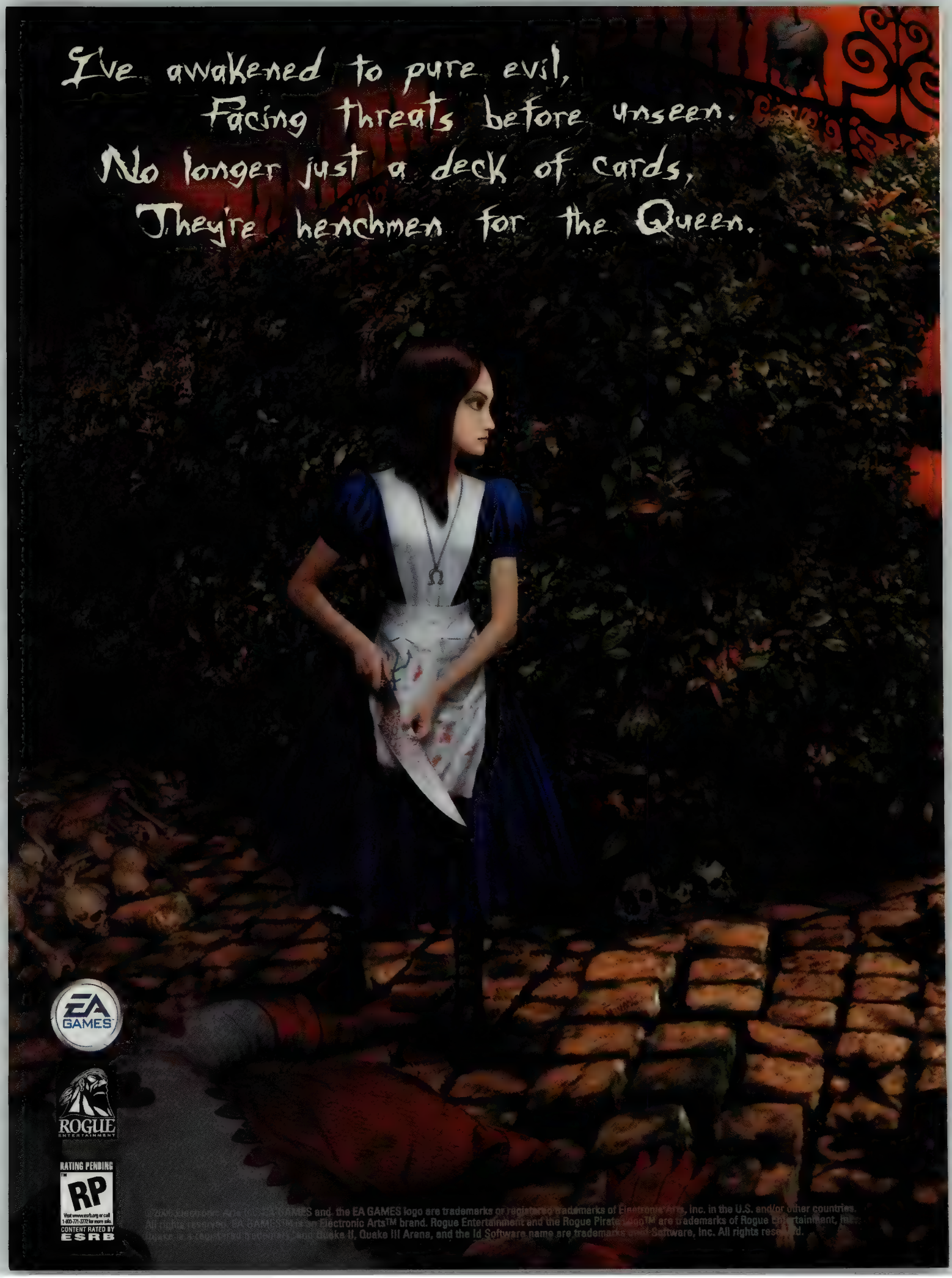
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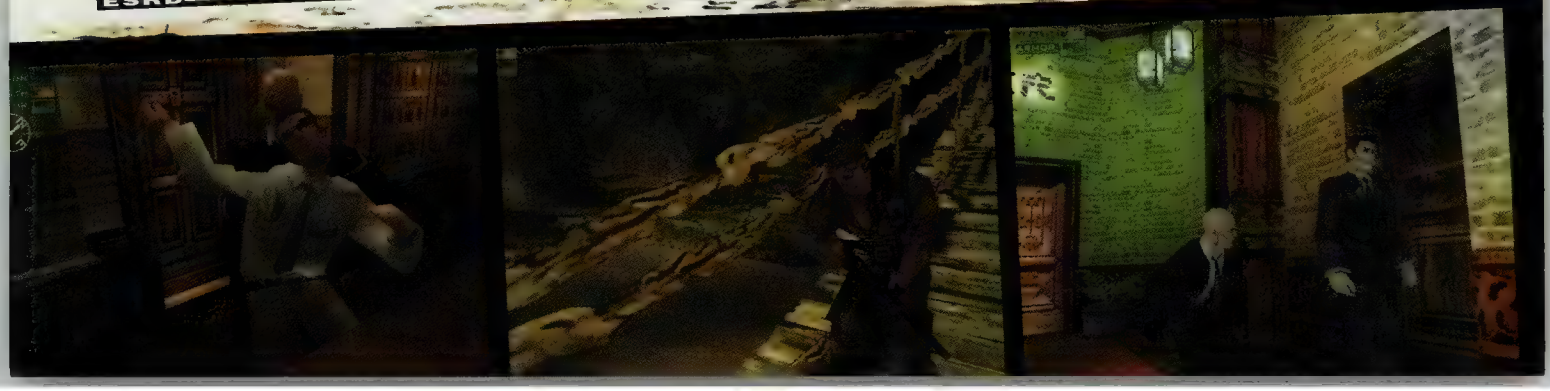


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CLIFF BLESZINSKI

- WHO: Producer/ Designer for Epic Games
- AGE: 25
- THE BUZZ: Lead designer on *Unreal* and *Unreal Tournament*
- WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: He actually *likes* to be called CliffyB
- CURRENT PROJECT: Executive Producer of *Unreal 2* and Creative Consultant on *Rune*, followed by The Next Epic Game. Cliff: "I can't say much, but I can tell you to begin your training now — you're going to War."
- HOW HE GOT STARTED: "Made a couple adventure games, sent them to Tim Sweeney. He liked what he saw and the rest is history."
- WHAT HAS INSPIRED HIM: "My beautiful wife Darcy, who has stood by me throughout my entire career."
- FIRST GAME PLAYED: "*Space Invaders*"
- WHAT HE SAYS ABOUT *UNREAL 2*: "Walking around in the levels is like strolling the set of a film with a $100 million budget."

"I have an unhealthy obsession with my happy childhood."
— CLIFF BLESZINSKI

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FROM THE MOUTHS OF GODS

WARREN SPECTOR



Of the new crop of developer talent, who would you pick as an up and coming "game god"?
For an up and comer, look no further than our own Harvey Smith. Rising from the ranks of Origin's quality assurance department, he went on to a position as Lead Designer on Multitude's under appreciated online game, *Fireteam*, and then went on to do some terrific work as Lead Designer on *Deus Ex*. He's now taking the step up to Project Director on *Deus Ex 2*. For an unsung game god who "up and came" long ago, you have to go with Doug Church. The guy's a great programmer, a great designer and a charismatic leader.
If you could give them some advice, what would it be?
The best advice I can give is kind of trite but so, so true — don't give in to commercial pressures. Make the games you want to make and damn the consequences. Do everything you can to make your games accessible to as many people as possible but always be true to your ideals. (If you can't write a manifesto outlining your design philosophy, give up now!)
What are you working on now?
Mostly I'm working on moving from Project Director into a role as Guy Running a Development Studio. It was great being a little more hands-on with *Deus Ex*, but now I'm looking to grow the Austin studio so we can handle several projects at once. I've signed on Randy Smith, an ex-Looking Glass designer, to head up *Thief 3*. I'm busy with the hard work of surrounding them with people capable of realizing our shared vision.

FROM THE MOUTHS OF GODS

PETER MOLYNEUX



Of the new crop of developer talent, who would you pick as an up and coming "game god"?
I had the honor of sharing the podium this May at E3 with Dave Perry of Shiny, and thought that *Sacrifice* looked amazing. Mucky Foot's *Startopia* looks very cool and, lastly, I think what Alex Garden of Relic is doing is the most original approach to the god game that I have seen in a long time.
If you could give them some advice, what would it be?
Don't lose faith — it's so easy to lose faith in your original vision for a game and forget what made you so excited about it. I love playing *Go*, and one of the golden rules of that game is that the original move you considered is always the right one to make; it is worth applying that rule to game design.
What are you working on now?
I am finishing off *Black & White* and trying not lose faith!

[Stevie is asked about condescension toward women in the industry.]

STEVIE: "An interesting thing about that: take a look at the *Quake* community. Most of the women in the *Quake* community have formed a social group. They stick together, they play in the same clans. They have this all-female software development team now. It's very much a community. There are a couple of us that aren't a part of it by choice. I have a guy brain. I do my own thing. For that, those people hate me, unfortunately. So, it's not so much guys holding the women down, I don't think. I think it's a combination of that and a self-imposed social system, a self-imposed morality."

ROBIN: "Our problem is we can't play [motion capture] back in any kind of realistic way that interacts and is interactive with the player. Sure, we can make a character play a fire animation when he pulls his gun, but making a character talk to you and interact, that's really hard."

ED: "One of the most impressive games that I've currently seen is *Virtua Tennis*. And why? Because when I look at it, I think it's a sportscast. I can't tell the difference and I'm like, this is f__ing cool, because I can't tell the difference. Photorealism. I think that's the next big barrier."



"The truth is, society is like Darwinian evolution; it's got to be responsible for its own survival."
— ALEX GARDEN

ROBIN: "My wife's a *Quake* player. I met her at a *Quake* convention, and she doesn't like the 'girl gaming' thing at all. My belief is there is an enormous number of female gamers out there like my wife who are just gamers. They don't see themselves as 'women gamers' the same way we don't see ourselves as 'male gamers'."

ED: "I actually believe the less we talk about it, the more likely it is to sort itself out. For example, I believe that racism continues to be a prevalent part of this society because we continue to bring it up. I think what stymies growth is making things an issue. I cannot put myself in the growth path of a woman. I just have to hope that what I enjoy making is something that other people will enjoy playing."

STEVIE: "I think that's one of the key factors for any woman that wants to get into the industry. When I go for an interview, I hope it never comes up that I'm a woman. I don't want to talk about it. I don't want them to think about it. I just want them to approach me like anybody else interviewing for the job. I do all these pictures and stuff, but when I go to work, I don't wear makeup. I have my hair back; I wear T-shirts and jeans. I am just one of the guys on the team working on the game, and people I work with approach me like that. You can't go in and say 'Hey, guys, I'm different' and then expect to be treated normally."

REALISM AND TECHNOLOGY

AMERICAN: "We've been doing [realistic behavior] with *Alice*. We've actually recorded, not motion captured, but filmed girls and the way they walk and move and so forth to get Alice to do all these things. We actually have thought about little twists of the head and flips of the hair and things like that."

STEVIE: "I think any time you try to create something photorealistic it comes with all kinds of high expectations. You say it's photorealistic, and people expect so much and it takes so long to create that you lose the focus on the fun."

CLIFF: "I think when you get closer to photorealistic, you draw a larger audience. Like my brother wants to buy a Dreamcast for *NFL2K* because it looks so real. You draw in more people."

STEVIE: "You have to have the resources to do that and do the game."

ED: "Exactly. The next big revolution is when we don't have to worry about technology anymore, when we don't have to functionally design our game around the fact that we're using a Fisher Price camera that's shooting fifteen frames a second in black and white."

ALEX: "The biggest barrier to entry, and I think you brought it up before, Stevie, is that a lot of games are really intimidating. That's why console games have a wider audience. Bottom line: the only reason they have a wider audience, and cost probably helps, too, but the main reason is it's just one controller. It's really easy. Everybody gets it."

CLIFF: "And the same thing also goes for game length. I'm sorry, but I don't want a game that takes 30 hours to play. You all may hate me, but I would like to have a game where I can purchase it for 25 bucks, the game takes ten hours, but it's a great ten hours, and that's it."

ED: "I don't think it's just game length. For example, one of the biggest killers in the game is what I call the reward loop. How many minutes do I have to play before I get something? Not to dis EA or



"It's not some kind of evil scheme to make more money and upset people simultaneously."

— BRAD McQUAID
ON CRITICISMS OF EVERQUEST



BRAD MCQUAID

- **WHO:** Producer for Verant Interactive
- **AGE:** 31
- **THE BUZZ:** Producer/Designer of *EverQuest*, the PC's answer to a controlled substance.
- **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:** Massively multiplayer games aren't going away.
- **CURRENT PROJECT:** *Sovereign*, followed by *Star Wars Online*
- **HOW HE GOT STARTED:** "I started working on a shareware game in '89 with a friend of mine from college. We didn't really have lives, so it was work all day and code all night on games. That's what got us all hired at Sony back in '96."
- **INFLUENCES:** "I played *Ultima II* on an Apple IIe in junior high, and I pretty much solved *Ultima II* and said, my God, this is what I want to do."

anything, but take something like *Shogun: Total War* — love the game — but I have to play for two hours to feel any sense of accomplishment. And I don't have two hours to burn just to get the smallest sense of accomplishment."

CLIFF: "*Solitaire* continues to amaze me. I always see this on airplanes. You see people with $3,000 laptops, doing something they could do with a 59-cent deck of cards."

ALEX: "Because it loads instantly and requires a zero investment of time."

ED: "You guys are going to hate me for this, but I think it has a lot to do with being turn-based. For a person to be able to play and have a rewarding experience at their own pace is incredibly valuable."

BRAD: "I think the solution here is let's not dumb down and give people less things to do."

ED: "Let's just become better."

BRAD: "Let's ease them into it. Let's not hit them over the head; there's too much stuff to decide. What keeps me away from some RPGs is when I have to think about them for a while before I can really enjoy it."

THE FUTURE OF GAMES

ED: "I think that the interfaces of the future are going to be intelligent. For example, *Battle Realms* uses tool tips on just about everything, but I think there's another way of doing that. I think if you're tracking that [a player's] mouse is hovering over a unit and he's not doing anything with it for ten seconds, like he's confused as to what to do, you might alter the tool tip. The tool tip might go from saying 'spearman' to 'click to select.' I think there's an entire level of intelligent interface that we haven't begun to incorporate."

ALEX: "You can't ever make decisions for the player that in any way affect his ability to play the game."

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ED: "I would never take something away from the player, I'd only add. I agree with you. Never take anything away from the player."

KEN: "Part of the problem, from my experience with PC development, is that the users are kind of spoiled. They love having options, but when you start allowing them to change all of the rules and parameters of game design, then the game design almost becomes irrelevant because they can make their own."

CLIFF: "I don't know if it's the users being spoiled, but [people loved] this level of customizability in *Unreal Tournament*. And for our next project, I actually would like to have a lot less of it. When I go to play *Tournament* online, I want to play just a regular deathmatch game, but there's so many servers set up with so many different configs, I had a hell of a time finding a normal game."

KEN: "To me that's pretty Darwinian in a way. One of the focuses of *Freedom Force* is mod-ability. What's great about that is, hopefully, the game will become something beyond anything I ever thought of."

AMERICAN: "That's a good point. We didn't even know rocket jumping was in *Quake* until we noticed people were doing it. You'll see them produce something that you would never even think to do with your product and then turn around and go use it."

STEVIE: "One of the things about *Quake* in the beginning is it was simple. Everybody played the same game. You couldn't really change it that much without creating mods. Now there is so much out there. It's too big."

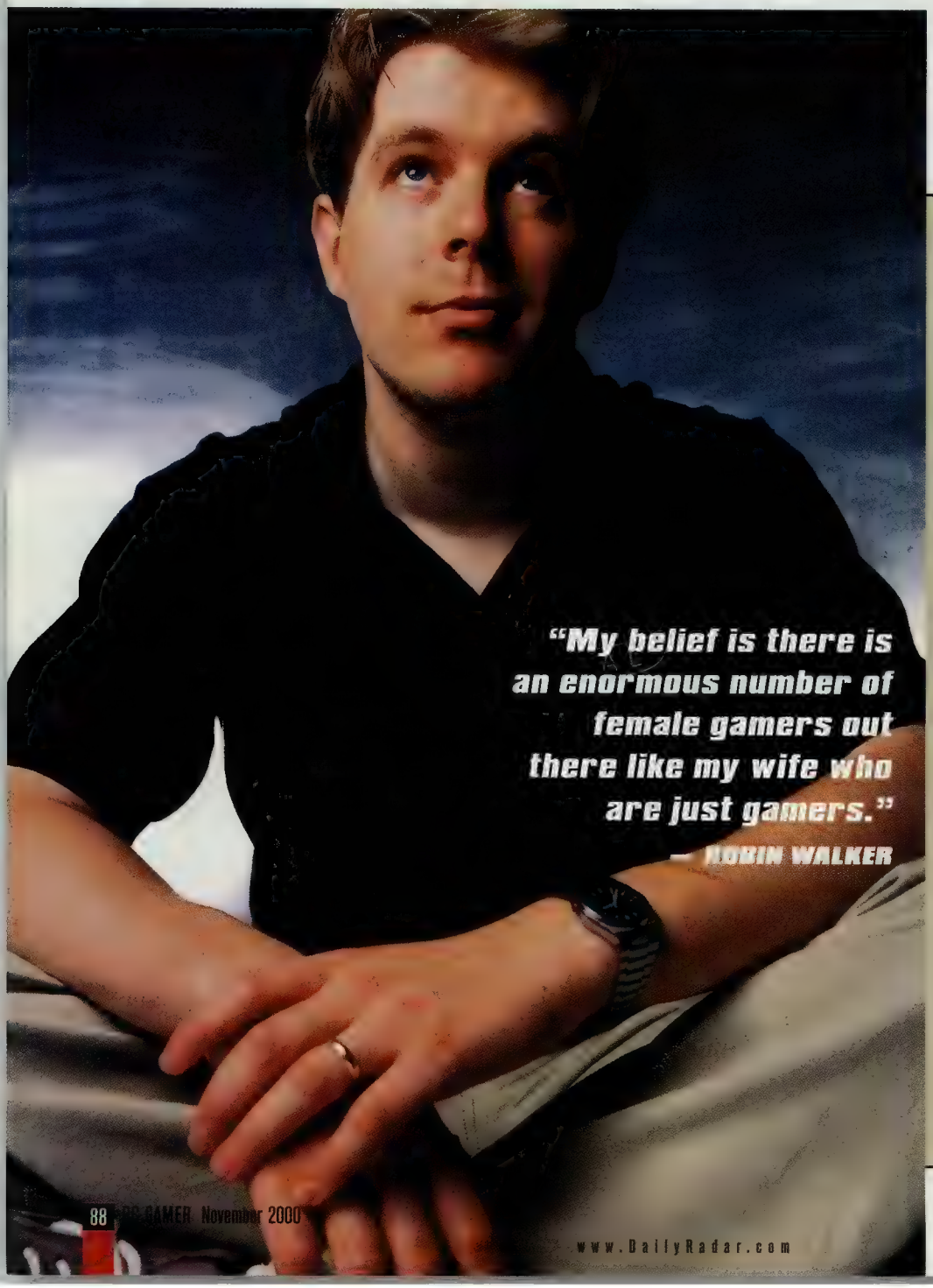
CLIFF: "Just make the right kind of game for your team and with the right amount of people."

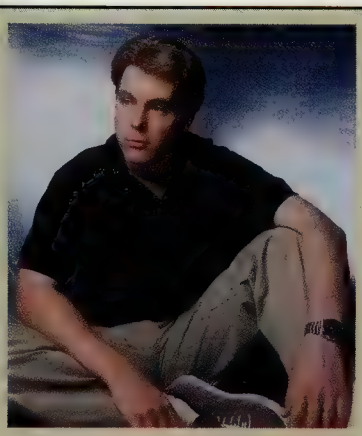
KEN: "But I want to make games that are the absolute literal output of my imagination."

CLIFF: "Being able to core dump your brain is where we want to be able to go eventually, but I think at that point we lose our jobs because then anybody..."

ALEX: "No, at that point we become indispensable and our teams lose *their* jobs."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 94 >>>





ROBIN WALKER

- **WHO:** Designer of *Team Fortress 2* at Valve
- **AGE:** 24
- **THE BUZZ:** Created *Team Fortress* as an amateur in his spare time
- **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:** Grew up without a TV in Australia
- **CURRENT PROJECT:** *Team Fortress 2*, the hotly anticipated team-based first-person shooter is still in development. Using a brand-new non-*Quake* engine, the gameplay will be an enhanced version of the popular *Classic* mod, but newer 'net code should ensure smooth online play, even over standard modems.
- **HOW HE GOT STARTED:** Made the *Team Fortress* add-on for *Quake*. *Team Fortress Classic* was later licensed by Sierra for *Half-Life*.
- **REASON HE BEGAN PROGRAMMING:** "I lived out, not quite on a farm, but my nearest neighbor was miles away. There was nothing to do."

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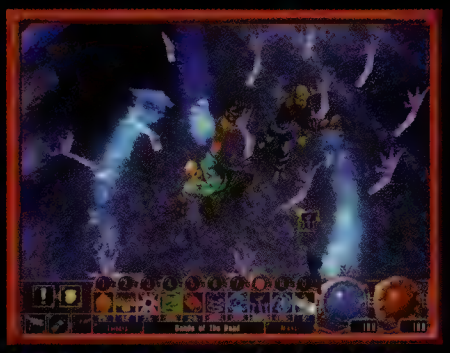
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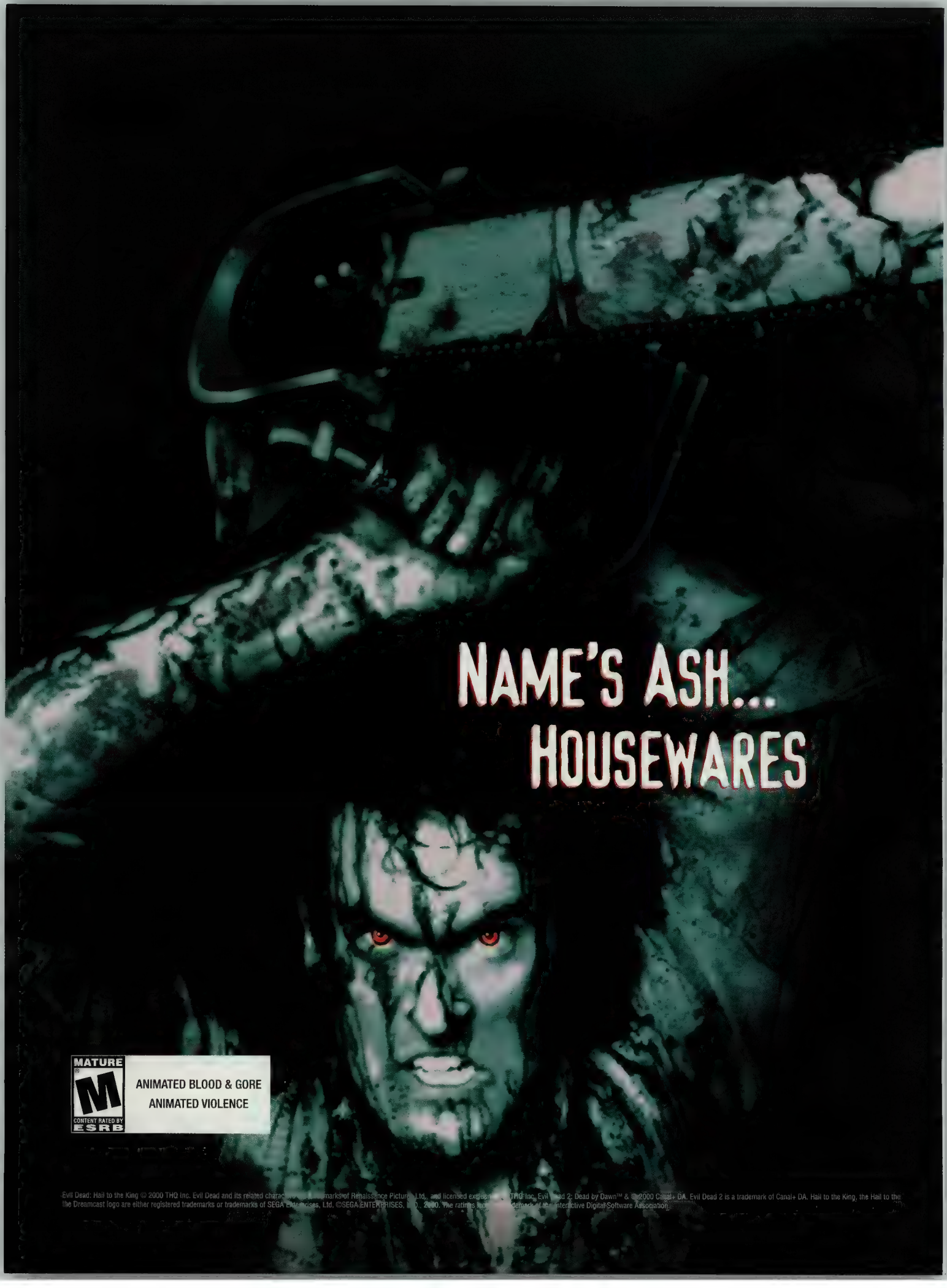
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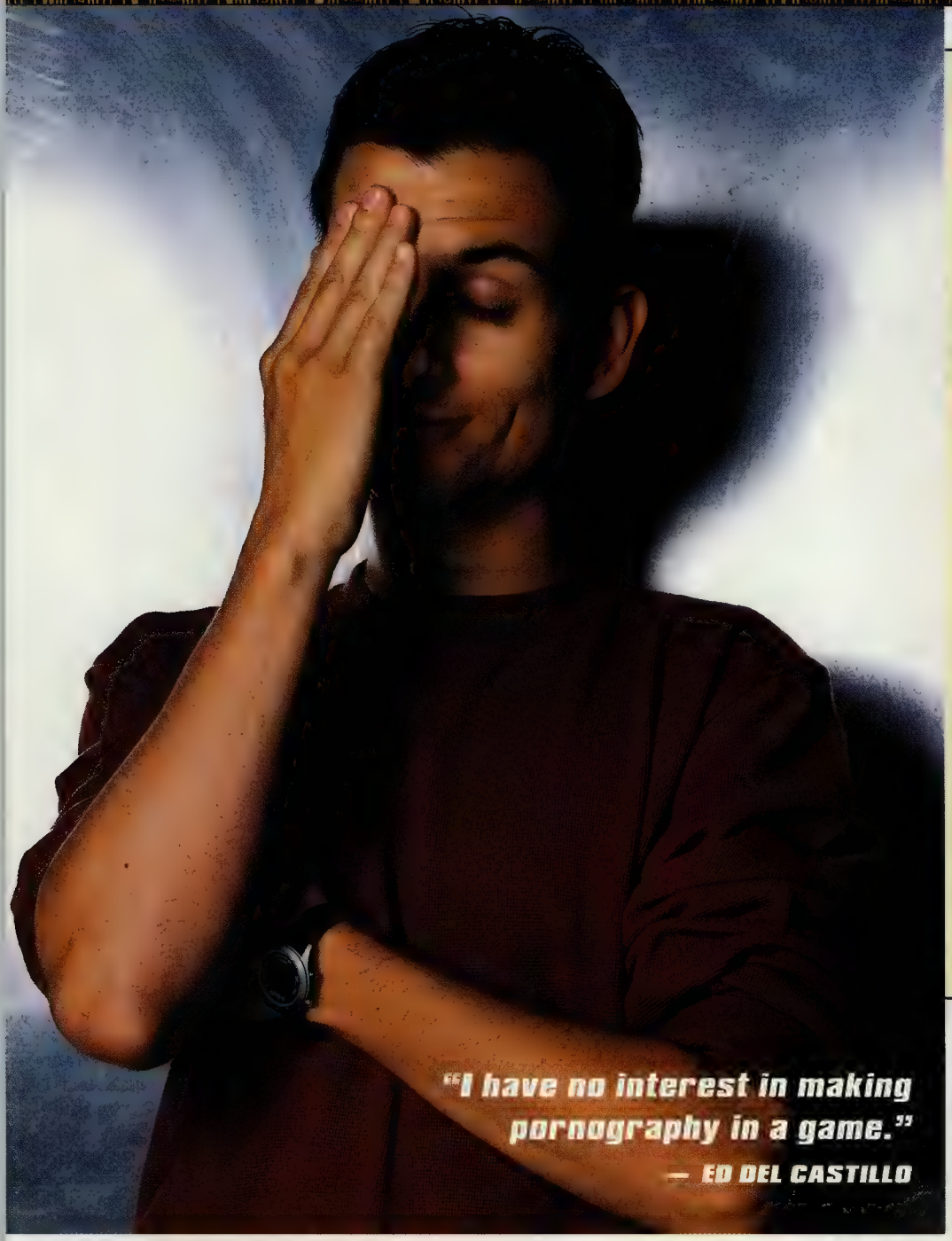
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ED DEL CASTILLO

- **WHO:** Founder/President of Liquid Entertainment
- **AGE:** 31
- **THE BUZZ:** Producer for both *Command & Conquer* and *C&C: Red Alert*
- **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:** Wasn't responsible for the tepid *Tiberian Sun*.
- **CURRENT PROJECT:** *Battle Realms*, a Japanese-style RTS set on an island of magic where four clans struggle for dominance.
- **HOW HE GOT STARTED:** "I just met a bunch of people around a *Gauntlet* machine and as a result ended up getting a job at Mindcraft [in customer support]."
- **INFLUENCES:** "*Ultima III* was one of the pivotal moments in video gaming for me."
- **MOVED OUT OF CUSTOMER SUPPORT BY:** Writing game manuals for free.

SINGLE PLAYER VERSUS MULTIPLAYER GAMING

ALEX: "I don't let anything influence the way I design games, but playing against people is more fun. I've never found an experience that was more convincing against a PC than it was against a real person."

KEN: "Online experiences tend to be very different, shorter, more focused, less contextual than single player experiences."

STEVIE: "Yeah, I think you get a totally different emotional reward from playing online with people versus a single player with a story. One of the best games I've ever played was *Grim Fandango*. That's not the kind of experience you could have online."

CLIFF: "I would love to do more single-player focused games. There's still so much more that you can do. But I think as far as multiplayer gaming goes, it's just another way to play. That's all it comes down to."

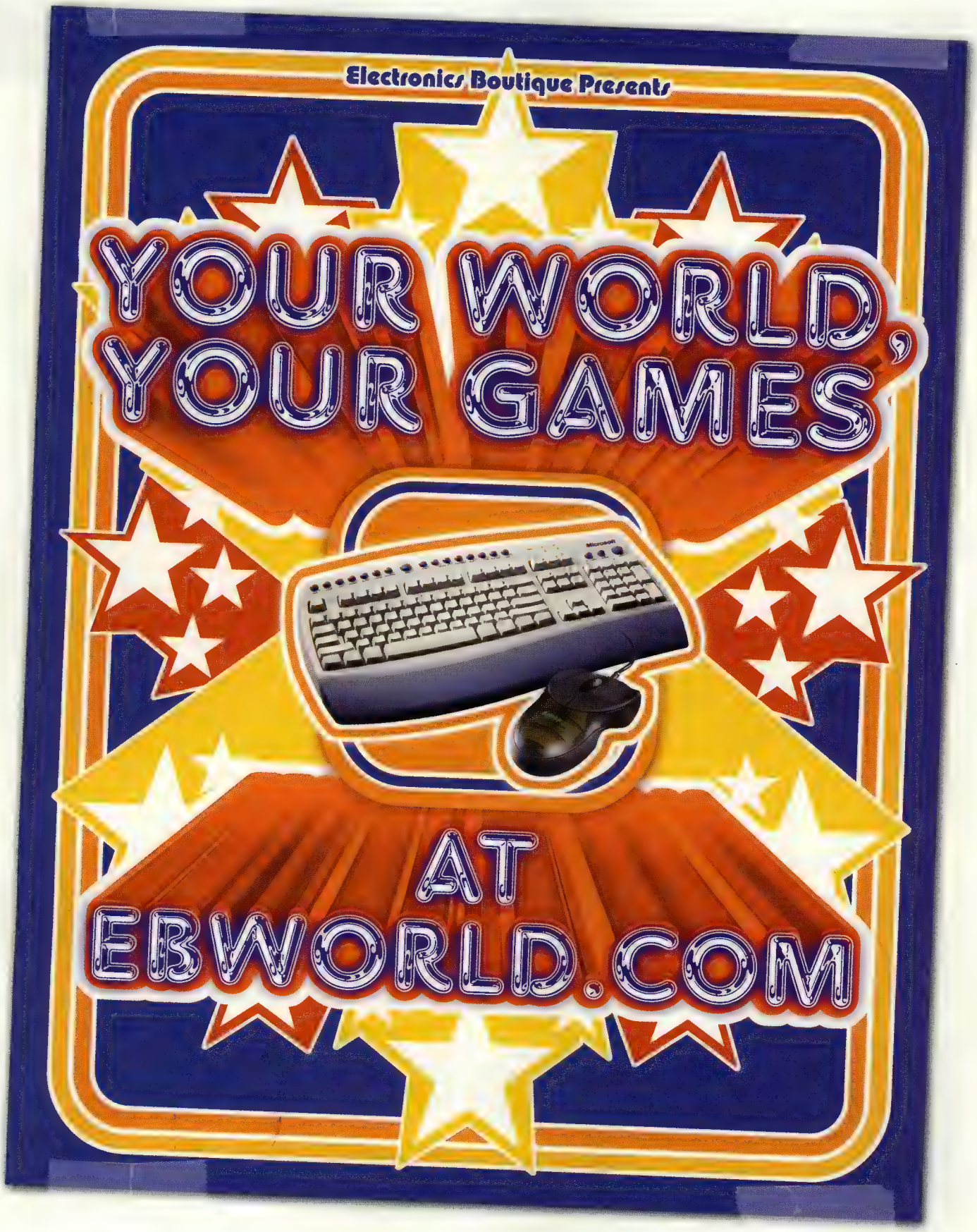
ED: "The multiplayer experience is all about the player telling the story and you're just creating the *Monopoly* board and letting them tell the story. I think there's always going to be the kind of people who crave being told the story, and the kind of people who crave creating a story. For example, I almost never play multiplayer online games. Why? Because that story isn't there for me yet."

COMMERCIAL SUCCESS AND DAIKATANA

ALEX: "[Commercial success] doesn't influence my decision in terms of what games I want to make, but it absolutely influences my commitment to quality, because it's painfully clear to me that if you don't listen to your consumers and you don't get over your own ego, you won't be successful. All you have to do is get lazy once and that can screw your market, period. With *Homeworld*, we made three fundamental sins — like not shipping the product when we had agreed we were going to. Slipping a year [had a] massive impact on our sales. The second one was post-launch community support, and how much we could have done to get the game to grow, like mod-ability.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 96 >>>

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BIOWARE'S RAY MUZYKA AND GREG ZESCHUK

■ AGES: Ray — 32, Greg — 31
■ THE BUZZ: Co-founders and joint CEOs of BioWare Corp., the developer of *Baldur's Gate I* and *II*, *MDK 2*, *Neverwinter Nights* and, of course, an upcoming Star Wars RPG.
■ WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: That's Doctors Muzyka and Zeschuk to you, bub. Both left practices as family physicians for their love of gaming.

Ray and Greg were unable to make the long trek from Canada to join our round table discussion, but with their track record and growing reputation, they were automatic choices for the inclusion in a New Game Gods story. Here's what they had to say to the questions posed to the round table panel.

Who or what has inspired you?
RAY: In the the early days of video games, on the Apple II (in the early 1980s), there were a lot of great games that were made by visionaries like Bill Budge, Scott Adams, Robert Woodhead and Andrew Greenberg, and Richard Garriott, among others. They, along with the other great games I played when I was a kid, have always served as inspiration for me.
GREG: The original Apple II games are also my biggest inspiration — I would have to add Silas S. Warner for the original *Castle Wolfenstein* and all of the people Ray listed above. Also, Warren Spector continues to shock us with his amazing games.

What got you into gaming?
RAY: Probably the first game I ever played that had a huge impact on me was *Wizardry I*. Another game I remember really clearly was *Doom* — I couldn't believe that I was actually seeing a 3D environment when I started the game up, and when the imps on the staircase in the very first room started to attack me, I just about fell out of my chair.
GREG: A spirit of exploration is the key to my lifelong addiction to games. I really enjoy just sitting down with a good game (particularly an RPG) and losing myself in it.

Both of you guys were once family physicians; How does that affect what you do now?
RAY: Being a good doctor is mainly about common sense and thoroughness — patients don't appreciate a half-completed cure, much as fans don't appreciate a half-finished (or buggy) piece of software. So we try to make sure our products are thoroughly tested and moreover, fun.
GREG: One of the best skills you learn as a doctor is responsibility — in running a company or making a video game you need to be responsible. You can never rest, you can never be satisfied, but there is also no better feeling than successfully completing the task.

What does it take to make it in the games industry?
RAY: Being a huge fan of video games always helps. Both Greg and I play video games every day, still. Common sense and understanding the value of the people you work with is also very important.
GREG: Lots of elbow grease. To be successful in the game industry, like any other job, you need to be willing to put in the hours while being incredibly focused.

What's the best idea you've seen in a video game in the past couple of years?
RAY: I really am enjoying *Deus Ex* right now. It reminds me a lot of my favorite games of all time, *System Shock* and *Ultima Underworld*. Both are quite complex, but they really have a knack for drawing you in.
GREG: Personally I loved how the *Thief* franchise essentially turned the FPS world upside down — it created a wonderfully immersive experience that was very thoughtful and introspective.


***Neverwinter Nights* will introduce modular gaming to online RPGs.**

What's the one thing you would like your fans to know about you that they probably don't know already?
RAY: Hmm, I'm actually away at a residence for my MBA right now, so I guess that's something that most people don't know.
GREG: I have a distinct aversion to pants! It's quite a problem being in Edmonton and not liking pants as it gets quite cold in the winter.

FROM THE MOUTHS OF GODS

SID MEIER



Of the new crop of developer talent, who would you pick as an up and coming "game god"?
There are a lot of great game designers working these days. I think I'd have to single out Chris Sawyer, designer of a number of unique games, most recently *RollerCoaster Tycoon*.
If you could give them some advice, what would it be?
What I like about Chris's work is that he clearly enjoys what he does — it shows in the product. He doesn't follow the latest fashion but makes games that he believes in — I think this is a good example for all game designers.
What are you working on now?
Right now I'm working on *Civ III*, and a new *Dinosaur* game, as well as other stuff, and we've just released our *Gettysburg/Antietam/South Mountain Civil War* battle collection.

The third thing was focus grouping. There were probably twenty subtle changes we could have made to the game engine that would have made it twice as accessible to people. Any one of those three things could have been addressed with a couple months of development, but we were so sure we were right."

CLIFF: "The longer that I'm in this biz, the more I'm realizing how important the PR marketing of the product is. I consider part of my duty to work with these people, and let them see my vision, the team's vision, the collective vision of the product, and help them communicate this to the average person."

STEVIE: "It's essential you have a good relationship with them. Our situation with *Daikatana* is a perfect example of how marketing can not only destroy games but an entire company. Nobody oversaw it. People just did whatever they thought was cool or funny, the 'Bitch' ad, the whole thing. They just ran with it, and it destroyed us. I think that the way the marketing was handled was just so out of control that by the time we were midway through, the only thing that could have been done was to start over with something new. I don't think we had very many options."

ON BEING A STAR

[American McGee is asked about the naming of American McGee's Alice.*]*
AMERICAN: "That was actually a marketing decision. I've been fighting against it for quite some time and have actually won the battle, finally. And it's going to be called just *Alice*. I see EA's argument for wanting to do this, which is: one, I have a very unique name, two, we had a very unique idea with *Alice*, and, three, they want to be able to build a market brand with my name on it so people can expect to go off and purchase a product, and then if it says 'American McGee's' or 'Sid Meier's' or whatever, expect a certain level of quality and look and feel."



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MONSTERMAN™ 2000, Michael Manley @ ActionPlanet.com

ALEX: "Yeah, but Sid's team respects that decision because Sid has had like 65 gazillion hits."

AMERICAN: "So, with my team, they didn't particularly respect that decision. It finally came out that these guys were like, 'Who the hell do you think you are putting your name on the box?' and it was something that I had been very aware of already and it made me feel pretty bad. Finally I said to them, we're going to take this off of here and that's that. I think there's some value in it, but I think that you have to earn it and I don't think that I've earned it yet."

STEVIE: "It is very marketing driven. I had the same thing happen with us. The marketing guys wanted to brand a game. They wanted it to be *John Romero's Daikatana* because it's easier to sell. People know the name. It's associated with other big games and it was easier for them. And he didn't fight it. I don't think he was thrilled about it. It became obvious long before we were done that it was a huge issue and there definitely was backlash among the people on the team."

ALEX: "I have to be really, really careful because I get a lot of attention when I'm promoting games and everyone wants to talk to the superstar personality, and I get a lot of attention. The truth is, it's not *Alex Garden's Homeworld*. It was like a hundred people who worked on that game in the end. Every single one of those people was responsible in some way for it being what it was."

BRAD: "What would be a good thing would be if somehow a game could be associated with the team that made it. We're a long way away from Garriott programming *Ultima I* himself. We need our teams, and everyone is integral on those teams."

CLIFF: "I'm always concerned about this and I'll be hanging out with one of the team members and there's joking about me being a press whore. I pull people aside and [ask them] 'Would you like to do more interviews?' and most of them say, 'No, no, I don't have a problem with you taking that.' There's this perception that if you get famous, you're going to get stalked and killed or something. And they don't want to do that."

ALEX: "No, the truth is, they don't want to be in the limelight, but they want to be acknowledged for the work they've done."

ED: "But I've got to admit, I'm still enjoying the fans. I'm at that stage still, where it's like, this is so cool, a fan site, wow."



"The more public a person you become, the more there's a sheen of phoniness that goes over you."
— KEN LEVINE

(Shortly after this discussion took place, EA confirmed that, due to marketing and promotional reasons, Alice *will be titled* American McGee's Alice *after all. — Ed.)*

THE PITFALLS OF FAME

KEN: "Do you guys take a lot of time in your day to deal with fans and people who E-mail you and want to get to know you as people and not just people making games?"

CLIFF: "Sometimes. They all start looking the same after a while."

ALEX: "It's horrible. I always feel like I have a responsibility to give a lot back because of how I got started. I feel really guilty when I don't have time to do that."

ED: "The kind of problem that I'm having is that some of the really hardcore fans think that all you're doing is waiting for his next E-mail. I mean, I've gotten E-mail from the same fan five times in the same day."

KEN: "I turn that off. I had [a fourteen-year old kid] call me in the middle of the night."

ALEX: "My [home] number was accidentally listed for a week. That was…interesting."

ED: "We're doing a real-time strategy game and one of the E-mails said, 'Well, let's do slavery.' They wanted to be able to enslave units. And I tried to explain not only the political ramifications of that, but the amount of extra time it would take, and I actually went through why we're going to say no to this, and he wouldn't relent. If you're going to make suggestions, that's cool. When I take the time to respond in an intelligent manner, at least have some respect for my opinion in the same way that I'm having respect for your questions."

CLIFF: "That's why [when] somebody that we've hired has gone through the process of finishing a game, my respect for them goes up so much because you don't know what it's like until you actually go through the process of shipping a game, of playing a game until your eyeballs bleed and you're so f__ing sick of playing, the last thing you want to see is the game."

ALEX: "We had a couple of French guys who were just over-the-top rabid fans, and they were trying to get us to put all this crazy shit in the game. They were trying to put these super-complicated features in, and eventually we just gave up answering their E-mails. Then they started sending us registered letters…"

ED: "You're kidding me. Registered letters?"

ALEX: "No, I'm serious, and then that week when my phone was listed, I got a call from one of them at 3:30 in the morning, and he said, 'I'm stuck on level eight.'"

AMERICAN: "I had that. I had those calls for *Doom II*, laying in bed, 6:00 in the morning, 4:00 in the morning, 3:00 in the morning. 'Hi, I'm stuck on…'— click."

STEVIE: "Part of the point with *Daikatana* where fans would just write in little questions — no big deal — you answer, and then they post your E-mails on the 'net. These are private E-mails, and they throw it out there so you get to the point where you really don't feel comfortable responding to anything."

BRAD: "Or you feel compelled to respond very generically because you don't know how it's going to be used."

ALEX: "And even right now, just talking about our fans, I mean, how many of us are really comfortable talking about how we feel about our fans? I mean, this is all on the record. And it's like, you love these guys, and they're the people who make it possible for us to do what we do. But at the same time, we kind of live in fear of them, too."

KEN: "The more public a person you become, the more there's a sheen of phoniness that goes over you. Because we know it's is going to get out to a broad audience, we don't want to insult any of our colleagues, any of our publishers, any of our anything."

ALEX: "No, American has funny hair, I'll say it."

FROM THE MOUTHS OF GODS

GABE NEWELL



Of the new crop of developer talent, who would you pick as an up and coming "game god"?
Minh Le is an amazingly talented developer who has gone largely unnoticed since he doesn't work at a traditional games company. Minh, or Gooseman as he is known online, has helped create *CounterStrike*, a *Half-Life* MOD that has more people playing it than *Quake III Arena* and *Unreal Tournament* combined. *(Check it out on this month's CD — Ed.)*
If you could give them some advice, what would it be?
Stay focused, pick your team wisely, and learn enough about the business side of things so that you don't get taken advantage of.
What are you working on now?
Oh, this and that. We're all very busy.

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WHAT ONE THING WOULD YOU LIKE THE FANS TO KNOW ABOUT YOU?

CLIFF: "I have an unhealthy obsession with my happy childhood. And I am trying to recreate the magic that I had as a child in the games that I work on. I mean, the whole fascination of discovery and excitement and possibility. I want to recreate that feeling because as an adult you get jaded. That's what I'm going to keep pursuing."

BRAD: "Some of the criticisms of *EverQuest* in terms of the game balance decisions we made — some of the allegations out there on the 'net are that Verant is just trying to make people play longer and don't care about the player. Certainly we want to make money and everyone wants to make a living, but myself and the team care deeply about what we created. And when we make hard decisions, there's pain involved when we have to upset a portion of our player base for the greater good. It's not some kind of evil scheme to make more money and upset people."

ALEX: "When I was a kid, I had a hard time growing up, and I didn't have a lot of people around me who were really supportive. I think I was lucky to pick some good role models. I do a lot of public speaking with high school kids, and I always notice there's three kids in the back row, and they're the stupid kids or the ugly kids or the fat kids or whatever. Truth is, those are usually the most inspired, brilliant people in the crowd. The reason they don't get along with everyone else is that they're just different. I love watching that light of inspiration go on in their eyes when they realize, 'I exist in this world and I can do anything I want to do.' If there's one message I like to get across to people, I like them to really and truly embrace [the fact that] anything that your imagination can conceive of is possible."

ED: "First, I would say, everything in moderation. I see some people who become so consumed by the Internet or by games, that they forego key, fundamental parts of their life. Kind of a rider on that is that every single thing you do affects other people, and you need to know that. You need to know that you are a stone in a pond and you are creating ripples. Have responsibility for your actions and understand how they hurt and affect people. And the last global statement is: you have more power than you think. Care about the people around you, even sometimes more than you care about yourself."



"I desperately want people to know that I'm in this industry because I love games."

— STEVIE CASE

KEN: "I think something that occurs to you as you get a little bit older is that people always do things for a reason. The more you understand people, the more you understand their motivation, the more you know what they're going to do and it's going to help you in business, it's going to help you in life."

STEVIE: "Of all the many misconceptions about me, I think the biggest one is that I'm not into games or something. I desperately want people to know that I'm in this industry because I love games. I want to make games and I want to make the best games possible, and I'm going to do whatever it takes to do that. I think like a guy in a lot of ways and that causes a very negative reaction among people that don't know me very well. I just hope that those people understand that I have good intentions. I love what I do and I want to do it well, and I hope they will allow me the freedom to really be a part of the industry instead of being that one girl in the industry. Because I want to be a part of it in a very real way and not be that token chick, you know. So, I hope people will work to not jump to conclusions and stereotype people based on very little information."

AMERICAN: "Everything happens for a reason. A lot of why I'm here today almost seems like magic, because it's all been this strange kind of synergy and synchronicity and so, it's kind of the world we live in is all so connected we have to be really careful about what we do, what we say, how we present ourselves to people that see us."

ED: "And as a personal aside, I think this kicks ass just because I spend so much time with my head in the sand, that I've never met any of you [at this round table], and it's cool now because I get the feeling that at least I could E-mail you guys with a question or something and I wouldn't be just like, you know, 'Oh Ed, who's that?' And that's kind of cool."

We think so, too. Our thanks go to Alex, Cliff, American, Stevie, Brad, Robin, Ken, and Ed for participating in our round table discussion. PCG

FROM THE MOUTHS OF GODS

CHRIS ROBERTS



Of the new crop of developer talent, who would you pick as an up and coming "game god"?
That Sid Meier guy strikes me as an "up and comer." Seriously, I was impressed by *Homeworld* last year. So, I think Alex Garden has potential.

If you could give them some advice, what would it be?
It still doesn't help at all with picking up the opposite sex (unless you're under 12). Oops, seriously, don't believe your own hype. Just stick to doing what you started out and make the games you want to play. Use the extra cachet to get your publisher to invest a little more in your next game. Upgrade the graphics. The sound. Use the extra money to create a richer experience. Never be complacent, always strive for improvement.

What are you working on now?
FreeLancer — same as last year, and the year before that, and the....

THE AFTERMATH



PHOTO BY ED DEL CASTILLO

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The Bargain Bin



ILLUSTRATION BY JACK MORTENSVAK

The Cheap Man's Guide to Good Gaming

www.DailyRadar.com

PIIIs, 1GB AMDs, and Voodoo 5500 AGPs, oh my! Super computers have finally paved the way to incredible, technological advances in PC graphics, sound and playability. Look over there — the ultra-cool *Quake III* engine is already appearing in beautiful games such as *Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K. 2* and *Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force*! Check it out — the graphics in *Alice* look super-sweet! Oh my goodness — *WarCraft III* and *Neverwinter Nights* look like they are going to rule! Welcome to the new renaissance in computer gaming!

Unless, of course, you're like me: budget-conscious and technologically deficient. Anti-aliasing is beyond me, speech over the Internet is incomprehensible, and did I mention, I think the world is flat? Why spend upwards of $50 on a brand new game when great bargains are ripe for the picking? All it takes is knowing where to look.

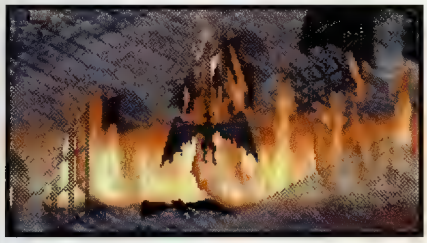
— By Scott Humphries

RULES OF THE BIN

Here are a couple of rules that may help you find the good games and stay away from the booty ones.

- Skim the bin for any game that has the word "extreme" written on the box and vow never to touch them.
- While you're at it, scoot all of the "hunting sims" to one side as well. You'd have more fun watching a wall-mounted Billy Bass sing "Don't Worry, Be Happy" for two hours than playing with those boxes of USDA Choice Lame.

Keep your trained bargain-hunting eyes on the lookout for these classics that'll run you $15 or less:



Diablo

(PCG issue 3/97, 90%)

Yes, you're the only person in the entire world who hasn't played it. Give in to peer pressure and buy a copy, already. By the time you finish it, *Diablo II* will probably be waiting for you on the bargain shelf.



Gabriel Knight (I or II)

(PCG issue 4/96, 96%)

Adventure gaming hit a new high with the debut of the Gabriel Knight series. Other games threatened scariness, but the Gabriel Knight titles delivered with crisp writing and intricate plots. We've seen piles of the original at some stores, so locating one shouldn't be a problem.



Dungeon Keeper 2

(PCG issue 9/99, 89%)

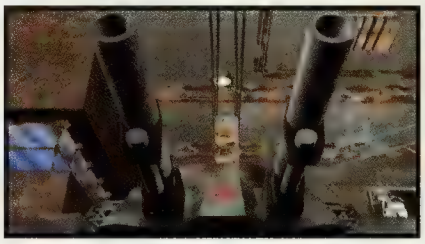
A new addition to EA's value line, *DK2* can be had for a mere $15 or less. And it's worth a buy for good reason: it's one part god sim, one part RTS, one part dungeon crawl, and all-around good/evil fun.



You Don't Know Jack

(PCG issue 3/96, 84%)

Before "the Reege" made game shows semi-cool again, this series was going strong on the PC. Be warned: you'll probably see a copy of *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* in the bin, too. Snatch a *You Don't Know Jack* game up instead. It's funnier, better at parties, and offers a higher question per dollar ratio than the Philbinator.



Command and Conquer/ C&C: Red Alert

(PCG issue 11/95, 12/96 91%)

Like *Diablo*, this one's a no-brainer. The real-time strategy game that coined the phrase "like *C&C* but...," it's a better choice than even its own sequel, *Tiberian Sun*. It's so popular that you may still find it in the "Hits" section instead of the sales rack.

5 GAMES THAT BLOW

Avoid these bargain bin hoodlums at all costs. They are armed with super-suckiness and extremely detrimental to your good gaming habits.

- **PANTY RAIDER** Yep, even a game with a great title can bite the big one.
- **VIRTUAL SNOOKER** I'm not even quite sure what a real snooker is, so I definitely don't want to play with a virtual one. *(Though if you're British or an anglophile, and know snooker, it's the best, if only, sim available — British Ed.)*
- **LANDS OF LORE 2** Just say "nay."
- **WILD WILD WEST** I'd have more fun playing a *Hudson Hawk* game.
- **NICK FALDO'S CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF CHALLENGE** This game makes hunting sims look good.

THE INTERNET BARGAIN BIN

Even if you don't live near the mall, a virtual bargain bin awaits you on the web.

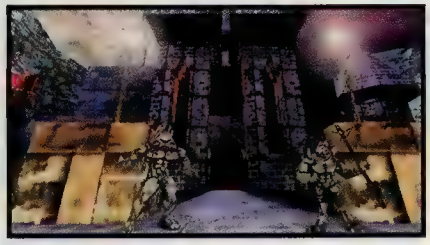
- **EBWORLD** (EBWORLD.COM) Electronic Boutique's online store site has new and used games.
- **GAMESTOP!** (GAMESTOP.COM) The home of Babbage's on the web, it's also a good source for new and used games.
- **AMAZON** (AMAZON.COM) Besides books, CDs, and DVDs, the Internet juggernaut can also set you up with a cheap game or two.
- **eBAY** (EBAY.COM) If you're willing to trust that someone a thousand miles away won't try and screw you over for a $10 copy of *Sam & Max Hit The Road*, it offers more choices than commercial software sites.



Full Throttle

(PCG issue 3/95, 80%)

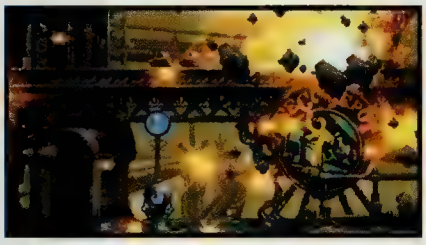
Short, but oh-so-sweet, *Full Throttle* is the adventure game Tim Schafer made before the classic *Grim Fandango*. This game is a bargain bin favorite, with its distinctive rectangular box shyly poking through the crap. Give it a home, won't you?



Unreal

(PCG issue 8/98, 92%)

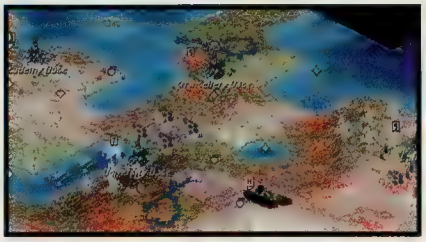
Not for anyone packing less than a PII 233, *Unreal* brought a sense of wonder to the first-person shooter genre. A new value-priced *Unreal Gold Pack* featuring the original game, the not-quite-as-impressive *Return to Na Pali* mission pack, and a strategy guide will be out by the time you read this, for less than $10.



Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus

(PCG issue 5/99, 90%)

Any of the Oddworld adventures are worth playing, but the newest, *Abe's Exoddus*, can be found as low as ten bucks. It's old school platform-jumping console action, only better since it's not a low-res mess played on your TV.



Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri

(PCG issue 4/99, 98%)

Wondering just who this Sid Meier guy is and why he's got so many games named after him? Pick up a value-priced copy of the ultimate god game, *Alpha Centauri*, and get acquainted. It's incredibly addictive, so a meager $15 entry fee could buy you months of gaming pleasure.



System Shock 2

(PCG issue 10/99, 95%)

A bargain at any price, *System Shock 2* is one of last year's best games and now you can own it for 15 bucks or less. If your system is really old, hunt down a copy of the very playable original instead. A thinking man's FPS, it's for anyone who thinks *Quake* is too mindless.



The Curse of Monkey Island

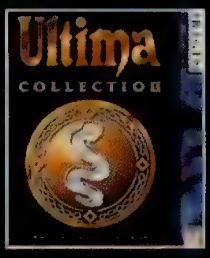
(PCG issue 2/98, 95%)

With the newest sequel nearing release, now's the time to catch up on this classic series from LucasArts. The Star Wars guys may have pulled a few blunders lately, but not a single one of their adventure games has been anything less than a masterpiece.

BUNDLES OF GOODNESS

Some of the coolest bundles on the shelves.

- **LUCASARTS ARCHIVE VOL. III** Probably the best of the LucasArts bundles. You'll get *Full Throttle*, *The Dig*, *Monkey Island 1* and *2*, *AfterLife*, and *Dark Forces* for as cheap as $20.
- **ULTIMA COLLECTION** You get *Ultima I* through *VIII* plus *Aklabeth*, the precursor to the Ultima series (and the first game created by Richard Garriott, aka Lord British), for only $15!



- **CLASSIC ATARI** Sure it's not *really* a bundle, but I buckled and threw down $10 for a flashback to the good ol' days when arcade games still only cost 25 cents.
- **FORGOTTEN REALMS ARCHIVE ($15) OR FORGOTTEN REALMS SILVER EDITION ($20)** Want to find out why *Baldur's Gate II* and *Pool of Radiance* are going to be so damn cool? Pick one of these colossal bundles and take it back to the source...
- **WARCRAFT 2 BATTLE CHEST** All the orcs you can shake a stick at, plus the strategy guide, and the expansion (*Beyond the Dark Portal*) for a $20 pop!
- **THE GABRIEL KNIGHT MYSTERIES** Sure, it's a little more expensive at $30, but you're getting two of the coolest adventure games ever to come out of Sierra Studios (*Gabriel Knight* and its sequel *Gabriel Knight: The Beast Within*) for fifteen bucks each.

In the end, your gut instinct is your best tool. Remember, these are the games that time forgot, just waiting for you to find them again. Give 'em a good home, play them regularly, and they'll be happy and treat you the same. And remember, don't let anyone ever tell you your system sucks! Just challenge the unbelievers to a game of *You Don't Know Jack* and spank them in the "Jack Attack." Long live the bargain bin. PCG

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really depends on where you sit.



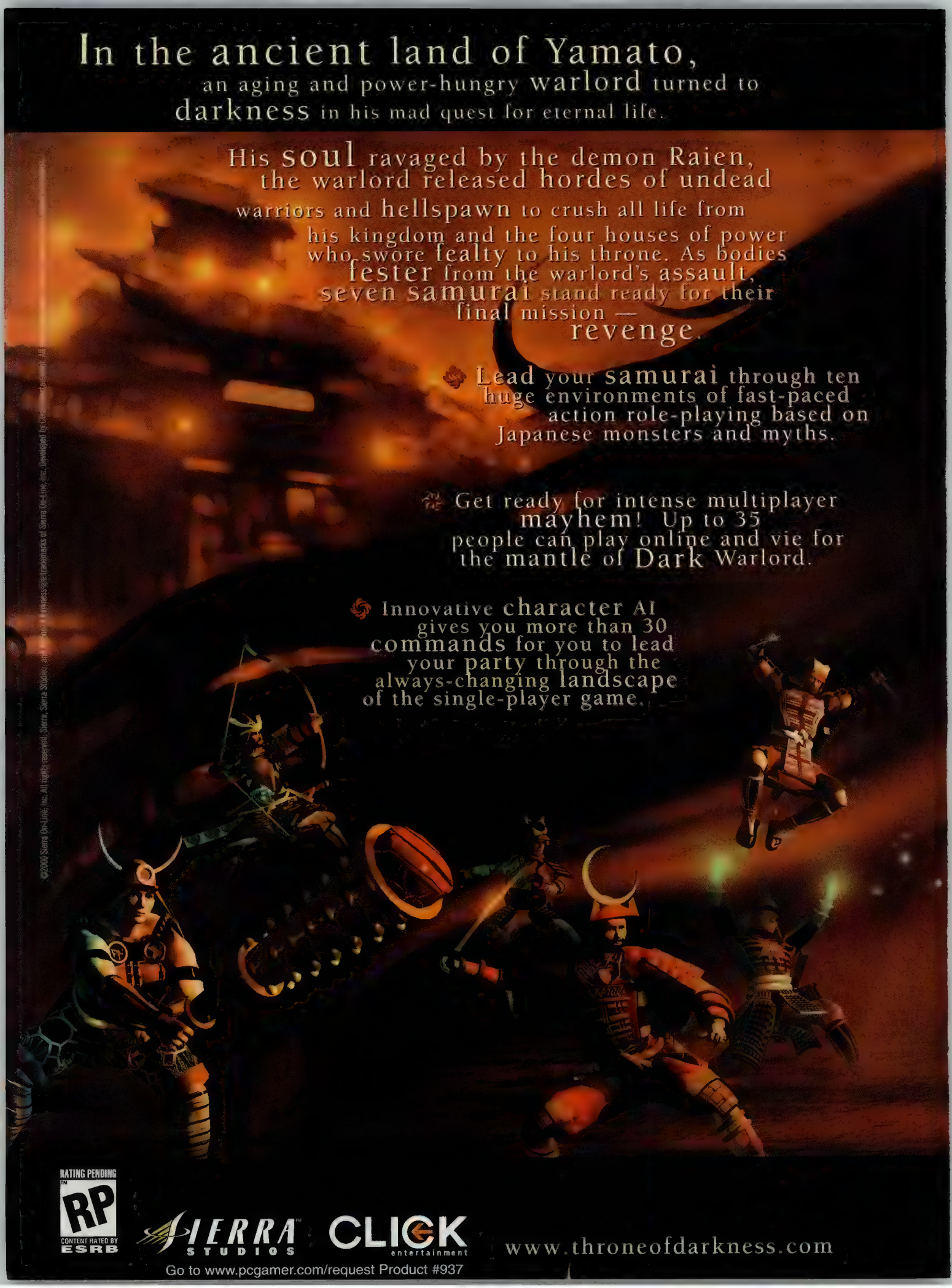




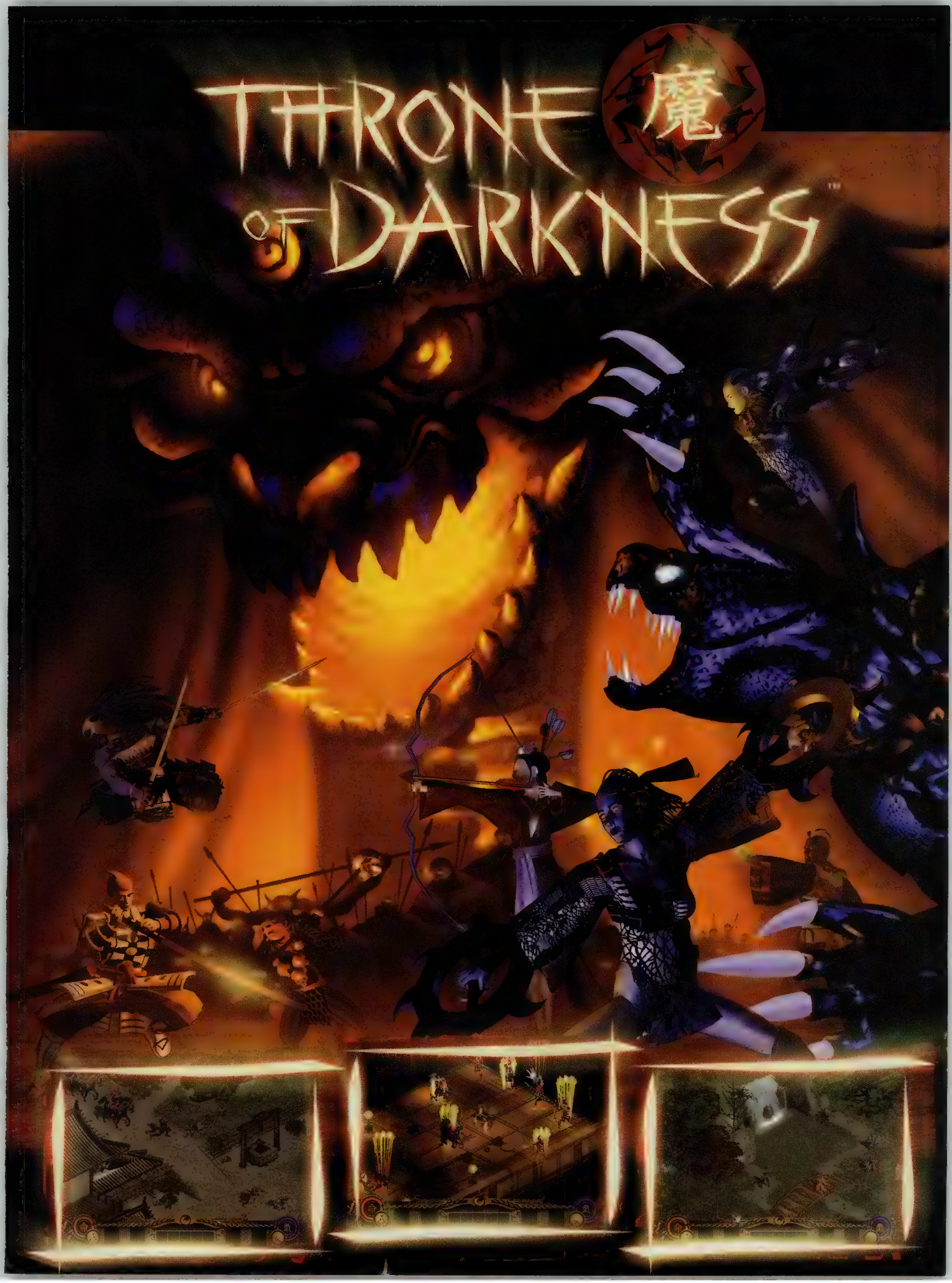


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"Bring Out The Stick"

PC Gamer is a bastion of many strange and some would say cultish traditions. But none is more feared than the rumored hazing ritual of new staffers, an induction carried out with a fearsome weapon known only as the Pointy Stick.

The rumor goes something like this: On a new staff member's first day, he or she is tied to an office chair, head covered in black nylon, and all the lights are turned out. Then, while encircled by the current staff who hover like hyenas, the new staffer is interrogated and poked repeatedly with a horrible pointed wooden stick. As with so many other things, the staff members of *PC Gamer* deny the existence of any such hazing ritual, and repeated attempts to locate a Pointy Stick in the office have met with failure.



Chuck is truly one of us now that we've introduced him to the stick.

So it is with great joy that we welcome Chuck Osborn as our new Features Editor. Formerly one of the geniuses behind *PC Accelerator* and subsequently a contributor to Daily Radar, Chuck brings a passion for gaming and a jovial humor to his job.

And we just want to say that for our part, there will be no hazing of our new colleague. Such an activity is childish, not to mention irresponsible and potentially unsafe. The very notion of a "pointy stick" smacks of the boorishness of Ivy League secret societies. It's just silly. We are, after all, professionals. Right, Chuck? "Yes! Ouch! Of course! Oww!"

Hardware Requirements

With each *PC Gamer* review in this issue, you'll find two very important pieces of information: the game's minimum hardware requirements and the hardware configurations we recommend as the *least* you'll need to really enjoy the game. While a game will run on the minimum system the manufacturer specifies, it might not run all that well. Because of this, we test each game on several systems so we can bring you a more realistic assessment of what you'll *really* need.

NEW AND IMPROVED RATING SYSTEM

Only the greatest should be rewarded with our coveted Editors' Choice award, and this tweak to the rating system reflects that. Now, at a glance at the score box on each page, you can see where the game fits in to the great gaming scheme of quality.

100%–90% EDITORS' CHOICE
We're battening down the hatches and limiting our coveted Editors' Choice Award to games that score a 90 or higher. It's not easy to get here, and darn near impossible to get near 100. Games in this range come with our unqualified recommendation, an unreserved must-buy score.

89%–80% EXCELLENT
These are excellent games. Anything that scores in this range is well worth your purchase, and is likely a great example of its genre. This is also a scoring range where we might reward specialist/niche games that are real breakthroughs in their own way.

79%–70% GOOD
These are pretty good games, which we'd recommend to fans of the particular genre, although it's a safe bet there are probably better options out there.

69%–60% ABOVE AVERAGE
A reasonable, above-average game. It might be worth buying, but probably has a few significant flaws that limit its appeal.

59%–50% MERELY OKAY
Very ordinary games. Not completely worthless, but there are likely numerous better places to spend your gaming dollar.

49%–40% TOLERABLE
Poor quality. Only a few slightly redeeming features keep it from falling into the abyss of the next category.

39%–0% DON'T BOTHER
Just terrible. And the lower you go, the more worthless you get. Avoid these titles like the plague, and don't say we didn't warn you!

GAME OF THE MONTH

Each issue, we select a very special game as Game of the Month. This is reserved for the product that most completely captured our hearts and minds. To earn this mark, your game can't merely be Editors' Choice quality...that's a given. We're looking for something spectacular.
And for this issue, the winner is...

PC GAMER Game of the Month November 2000

AGE OF EMPIRES: THE CONQUERORS



p.126

EDITORS' CHOICE

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

Every month, we honor the best games we see with our Editors' Choice award. It's not easy to earn, and there are a lot of excellent games that fall just short of the honor. So when you see the *PCG* Editors' Choice logo on a game at a local software shop, you can bet it's among the best.

HEAVY METAL: F.A.K.K.2



p.118

HOMEWORLD: CATACLYSM



p.130

CATEGORY	Action-adventure	REQUIRED	PII 300, 64MB RAM, 30MB hard-drive space, 3D accelerator card
DEVELOPER	Ritual	WE RECOMMEND	PIII 500, 128MB RAM, 400MB hard-drive space
PUBLISHER	Gathering of Developers	MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS	None

Heavy Metal F.A.K.K.2

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

What more could you want from a game besides guns, babes, gore, and good old-fashioned fun.

Look up at the corner of this page. Do you see that little black, white, and red logo that says Editors' Choice? Yes? Do you know what that means? That little logo means: this game worth buying. That little logo means: this game is going to be fun. We're happy to slap that logo onto *Heavy Metal F.A.K.K.2*.

There's a chance that by now you may have read reviews that say otherwise. It's been suggested that *F.A.K.K.2* is too short, and *F.A.K.K.2* is too easy. I'm here to make you realize why you rely on and trust *PC Gamer*. How so? Because *F.A.K.K.2* is just plain fun. That's right, I used the "F" word. Fun. How often does a game come by that's so fun to play, you just can't seem to stop? I'm talking about a game that glues you to your monitor and doesn't let go even after you've realized it's time to go to bed and your eyes are about as dry as two slivers of beef jerky.

Heavy Metal F.A.K.K.2 is a third-person action/adventure game that puts you in the thigh-high boots of Julie, a super-tough, gun-toting, sword-wielding, thong-wearing Amazon of a woman. Julie lives on Eden, a planet where the grass is green, the women are all generously endowed, and the water gives you the closest thing to immortality this side of the galaxy. The story starts off 30-some years after the events in the animated movie *Heavy Metal*. Julie has defeated the tyrant known as Tyler and now lives under Eden's powerful shield that protects their world, with a *F.A.K.K.2* hazard beacon warding off wayward travelers. *F.A.K.K.2* stands for "Federation Assigned Ketogenic Killzone" and basically means: "Stay out or you will die a horrible, horrible, death."

Of course, it's only a matter of time before the evil alien Gith starts banging on said planetary shield. It all begins with a strange meteor shower. A few space rocks manage to break through the barrier, and at the same time, Gith's army shows up and terrorizes the good inhabitants of Eden. It's then up to Julie to find the cause of all this. Along the way, she'll meet strange characters, fight bosses, solve puzzles, and blow the crap out of a few thousand aliens.



Julie changes costumes throughout the game, with each one covering less flesh than the last.

Then again, those aliens aren't all pushovers. Flesh Binders, Gith's main assault units, are made from the flesh of conquered races. Theses guys pack a serious



Get ready for some insane levels. You can't tell in this picture, but this entire background rotates for a dizzying effect.

www.HappyRadar.com

JULIE STRAIN
QUEEN OF SCHLOCK



She isn't exactly a household name, but Julie Strain has been in more B movies than you can shake a rubber sword at. Hence, her unofficial title as "Queen of B Movies," evidenced by appearances in such classic fare as *The Bare Wench Project, Bimbo Movie Bash, Lethal Seduction,* and of course, *Heavy Metal 2000.*



Julie's first costume gets more and more ripped as you get further into the game.

punch with flamethrowers, machine guns, and up to three other weapons. Then there are the Soul Harvesters. Looking like a cross between Psycho Mantis from *Metal Gear Solid* and Pumpkinhead, these guys have a devastating close-in whirlwind attack and can teleport at will. One of the coolest things about *F.A.K.K.2* is that many monsters appear as bosses at first (such as the Soul Harvester) and then become sword fodder later on in the game.

As the game begins, you're quickly introduced to the people of Eden and given a general tour of the town you'll soon be saving. You're also presented with an opportunity to play a training mission, which is highly recommended in order to learn to use *F.A.K.K.2*'s innovative two-handed fighting technique.

> In a world of mixed genres and hybrid games, *F.A.K.K.2* is a nice fallback to the roots of action games.

The interface is simple, and very similar to the one used in *Half-Life*. You use the number keys or your mouse wheel to scroll through the weapon types, and then use the right or left mouse button to equip whatever you select. So if you want to equip a pistol in your right hand, you right-click on the pistol. If you want a shield on your left arm, you left-click on the shield. Now, you hit the right button to fire your pistol and the left button to bring up the shield. Simple, really.

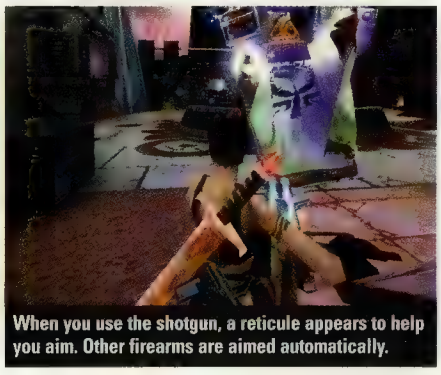
You're also able to chain together combos between the weapons by timing your button presses. Watching Julie execute those combos is a blast. Few things are more satisfying than jumping into a group of half a dozen Happy Masks (little aliens made of debris from other creatures that like to attack in swarms) and cutting them all down with a devastating sword/Uzi combo. Julie's arsenal will include a variety of edged weapons, from flame swords to a massive battle axe, and plenty of firearms, such as Uzis, bazookas, and a shotgun. To tackle really tough cookies, she has a massive flamethrower, a huge chain gun, and a chainsaw sword. A good defense is also important, which is why Julie will have access to two different shields (a small one that she can move with and a large one that requires her to stand still when using it) and various pieces of armor that she picks up during the game.

Basic controls feel like a mix between *Tomb Raider* and *Drakan*, but surpasses them both. Julie moves fluidly and can do everything Lara and Rynn could do and more. Throughout the game, she'll climb walls, use jungle gyms, creep across narrow embankments, and shimmy along edges.

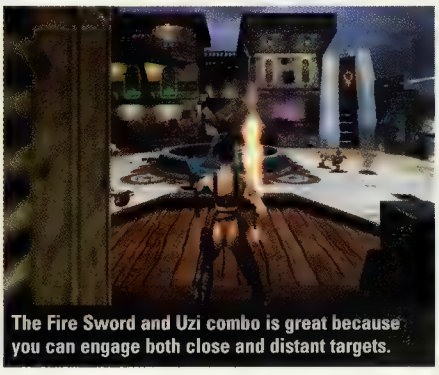
Just watching the game in motion is a treat, thanks to the spectacular *Quake III* engine. *Heavy Metal F.A.K.K.2* is easily the best-looking game to use the *Quake III* engine so far. The textures are crisp, clean, and beautiful. The environments are lush and vibrant, and the characters range from beautiful to utterly bizarre. You'll travel through ancient temples and raging rapids, where you flow with the currents over the river, and venture through the heart of a deep canyon, carefully navigating narrow footways. The folks at Ritual used every trick that the *Quake III* engine offers, plus some of their own (including skeletal animation) and it shows. From futuristic towns to ominous fortresses, every section of *F.A.K.K.2* is sure to impress.



These ghosts won't hurt you at first, but that all changes further on in the game.



When you use the shotgun, a reticule appears to help you aim. Other firearms are aimed automatically.



The Fire Sword and Uzi combo is great because you can engage both close and distant targets.

THE BRUNETTES **HAVE IT**

While some people may have a thing for blondes, the gaming world has proven time and again that brunettes are the key to success. How did we come to this conclusion? Just take a look at the list below and see for yourself.



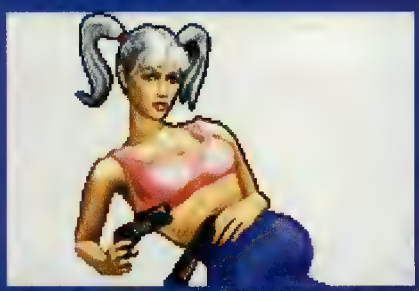
Lara was the pioneer who started the renewal in strong leading ladies. While the *Tomb Raider* series has grown a bit stagnant lately, it's still a strong seller.



This red-headed heroine could swing an axe every bit as well as Lara could fire off a shotgun. *Drakan* was highly rated and had solid sales.



Julie from *Heavy Metal F.A.K.K.2* is probably the baddest one of the bunch. We'd bet good money that a sequel is on the way.



Allison Huxter from *Space Bunnies Must Die!* was a total flop. Was it because of the trailer trash look? Was it because the game blew chunks? Or was it because she's blonde?



What modern action game would be complete without giant...swords?

Sadly, the rumors about the game being short are true. It's taking the above-average gamer about ten hours to blow through *F.A.K.K.2*. A few bosses may stump you for the first few tries (each has numerous specific tasks to complete, limbs to lop off, etc. in typical console fashion), but you'll most likely figure out how to beat them within five minutes. The end boss is an exception, and you should expect a pitched battle when you get there, but you get plenty of hints of what you need to do.

Actually, this game hits you over the head with hints that aren't even remotely subtle. Every puzzle you encounter will have glowing pieces that are key to solving them. Crates glow, levers glow, buttons glow, switches glow. This is terrific for the newbie gamer, though the hardcore crowd may not like being "babied" like this. Personally, I found that it helped the game to flow and keep the action at a decent pace — which is what *F.A.K.K.2* does best.

From the moment I first loaded it up to when the last credits scrolled by, I had an absolute blast. I wanted to perfect the combos, I wanted to make progress just to see what the next area would look like, and every time I found a new weapon the first thing I'd do was initiate a combo and see what it did. I actually took the time to stop and try to find a way to get to every hidden object and really explore the land of Eden. I even loaded up older saved games to try out levels with different weapons.

Ritual has created a fast-paced, third-person action game that's entertaining and fun. They've managed to make it easy to pick up and play. It doesn't require you to spend two hours in training, and it doesn't do anything to frustrate you. Casual gamers will like it for the no-nonsense action, and hardcore gamers will appreciate the change of pace. In a world of mixed genres and hybrid games, *F.A.K.K.2* is a great fallback to the roots of action gaming. From wholesale slaughter of bad guys to big bad bosses to big-assed guns and sharp, pointy swords, *F.A.K.K.2* is a truly a queen among action games.

— Li C. Kuo

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Great graphics; genuine fun; what an action game should be.

LOWS: Ends too soon; you have to fight mosquitoes. Didn't *Daikatana* teach us anything?

BOTTOM LINE: This one goes goes right back to the roots of hardcore action gaming.

PC GAMER 90%
EDITORS' CHOICE

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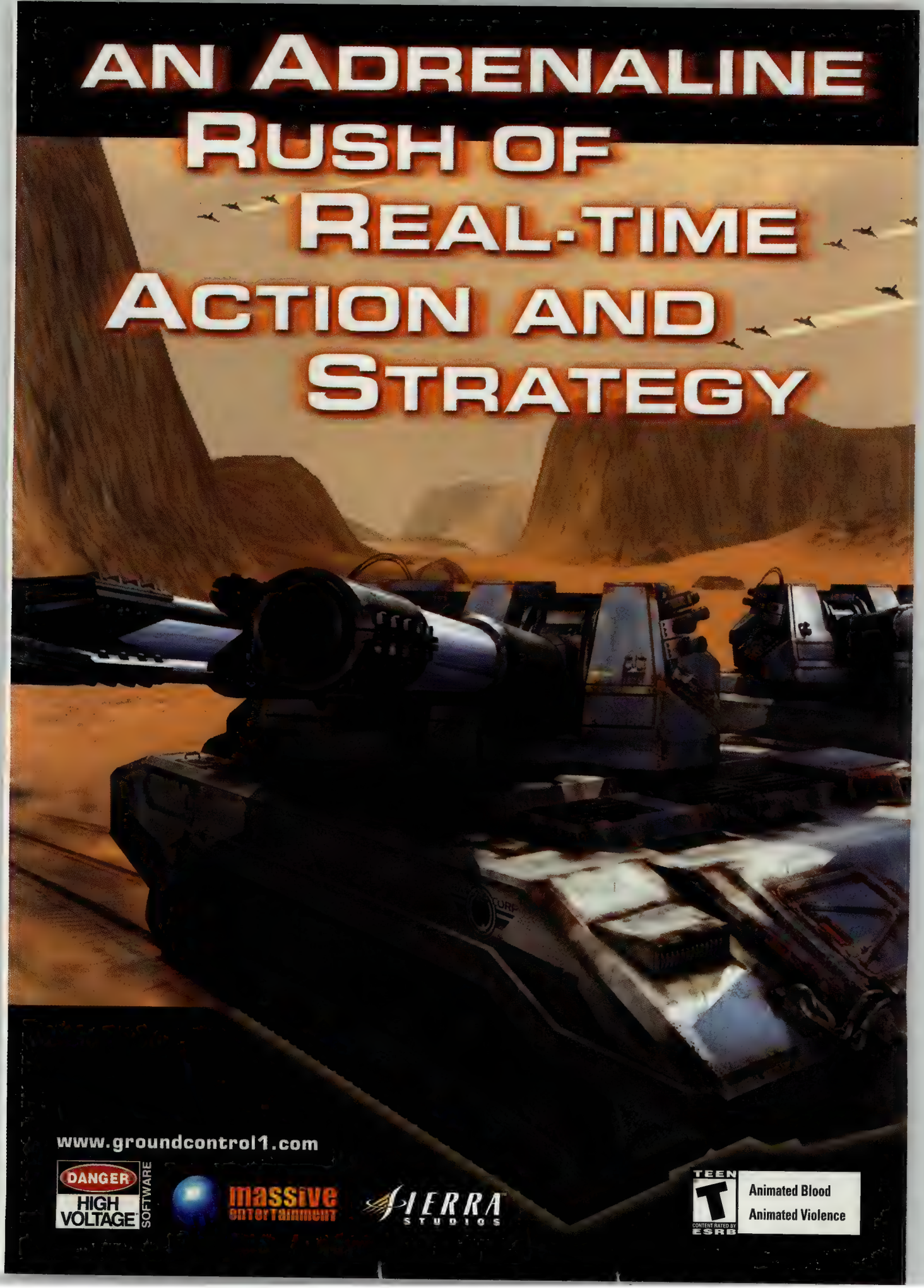
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The New York Times - June 22, 2000
"It is so lifelike and seamless that simply being in the game is its own reward."

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Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #100

Game of the Month PC GAMER November 2000

CATEGORY	Real-time strategy	REQUIRED	P166, 32MB RAM, 100MB hard-drive space, *Age of Empires II*
DEVELOPER	Ensemble	WE RECOMMEND	PII 300, 128MB RAMator card
PUBLISHER	Microsoft	MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS	8

Age of Empires II: The Conquerors

Welcome to an expansion pack so complete you should buy the original just to find out how good it is.

It's time to bury the old phrase "you can't improve upon perfection," because Ensemble Studios just did it. *Age of Empires II* was hailed as one of the absolute best real-time strategy games ever, delivering both powerfully appealing graphics and delicate gameplay balance. But the *Conquerors* expansion disc takes it to an even higher level of accomplishment.

Not one element from the original game escaped their relentless onslaught of improvement. Every civilization has been given a new unique attribute that either amplifies their original strengths or helps them compensate for a weakness. For example, the already deadly Viking Berserkers regenerate even faster once Berserkergang is researched, and now the British Longbowmen get to toss a few more shafts with the range increase gained from the Yeoman technology. A host of gameplay tweaks serve the dual purpose of weakening some of the strongest civs (*cough*, Teutons, *cough*) and beefing up some of the less used units, like the Cavalry Archers and Camels, resulting in more well-rounded battles than before.

Remember the near-useless battering rams? Now you can garrison infantry in them, making them more like castle-wrecking APCs and less like flimsy rolling log cabins. The annoying idle villagers? Fixed. Now after they build a Mine or Lumber Camp they'll begin harvesting resources automatically. You can also select a group of them and click on a farm, and they'll spread themselves out evenly over the remaining unattended farms. Add the ability to cue automatic farm rebuilding, and there's just no going back.

Conquerors also adds five new civilizations to the original 13, some of which were noted as curiously absent from the original. The Spanish are probably the strongest of the bunch, with both Missionaries (mounted monks) and Conquistadors (mounted hand-cannoneers) granting them the strongest and most mobile army in the game. The nomad Huns need no houses and are ruthless raiders whose mounted Tarkans are able to smash buildings quickly and escape before a counterattack can be mustered. The Koreans master the defensive arts, with armored War Wagons that shoot ballista bolts and covered Turtle Ships. Both the Aztecs and Mayans have had their cavalry units replaced with special Eagle Warriors who can run just as fast but are much cheaper to produce, and are complemented by the Jaguar Warrior and Plumed Archer, respectively. These last two civs also have a new set of graphics for their buildings, a beautiful Meso-American style composed of huge stone blocks and adobe.



Close combat gets even hairier with the addition of new combat units in this pack.

A handful of surprising additions make this delightful picture even prettier. The snow and jungle terrain types are more than just eye candy. They're also tactically important, since your units will leave lingering tracks in the snow to betray their position, and you'll have to avoid the jaguars that lurk in the jungle. The Petard and the Halberdier units make their debut, the former functioning as an explosive saboteur and the latter as a cheap cavalry meat-grinder. You're now not only able to record the entire game and play it back, but also to bookmark "chapters" in the recording so you can skip to the juicy parts immediately. Finally, Ensemble has added the ability to take a full map screenshot — so you can put a full-sized picture of your awesome empire on your wall for all to see.

Usually in expansions, you expect the new campaigns to consist of additional missions, much like the original but more difficult and largely designed to introduce new units. Well, the four new campaigns in *Conquerors* overwhelm you with quality



New civilizations add sharp new architecture.



New and improved siege weapons make life even tougher on poor medieval townfolk.

www.DailyRadar.com



New village activities create much more dynamic cities than seen in *Age of Empires II*.



It's good to be the king!

that far exceeds those expectations. During every mission, you'll find the action guided by frequent interludes wherein recurring key characters will deliver plot-driving dialogue that truly makes you feel as if you're playing a historical adventure as well as a RTS game. Many missions offer you choices, such as deciding whether or not to smash the nearby town to take its limited resources quickly, or diplomatically ally with them and establish permanent trade routes — a feature that I've never seen in a RTS game before, and I certainly hope to see again.

The design and scripting of the single-player maps is so intricate that it dodges the deadly "map editor" look and feel, instead giving you living villages, towns, and camps that bustle with activity. Often you'll find neutral buildings and units who will join or challenge you, such as the group of mysterious witches in the Attila campaign who lurk deep within a skeleton-strewn forest and demand you sacrifice villagers to them — and if you obey, they'll grant you control of a score of ravenous wolves. Most importantly, every mission forces you to change tactics to reach shifting goals, but never so severely that your general strategy is derailed.

Your strategic planning is harshly tested by the variety of new mission goals, which can include rescuing people, defending the construction of a Wonder, collecting 10,000 gold, forming alliances with quarreling tribes, and even rustling wild horses. Only occasionally do you face the stale setup of being forced to overpower a massive and entrenched enemy with only a handful of units, and even when that happens, you're guaranteed to encounter scripted plot twists that will turn the tide of battle back and forth, changing what would normally be a tooth-grinding war of attrition to an exhilarating test of your mettle.

These campaigns will help prepare you for the best part of *Conquerors*, its multiplayer mode. It's a whole new world now that five new civs have entered the arena, and old habits are going to have to die hard. Many of the standard tricks, like town center crawling and Paladin rushing, have been tweaked out of the game, and all new surprises await — now that siege weapons don't hit your own army, you'll find them much more common in battles, and since almost every neglected unit (Woad Raiders, Samurai, and Berzerks) has been improved, you'll see more people playing as those civs.

Due to the revamping of the diplomacy interface and newly color-coded messages, you're able to communicate quickly and trade with your allies. There is simply so much new material here that even veterans of the game will find themselves challenged by newcomers — it's really that different.



When these boys come charging, it's time to start panicking — get the heck out of there!

Rarely do you find a game, much less an expansion, that delivers so much and with such high quality. Be it the honor-driven missions of the Spanish El Cid, who time and time again rallies much-needed troops to his side by reputation alone, or the dark marauding of the infamous Attila the Hun, whose town-razing Tarkans leave nothing but ashes in their wake, you constantly feel as if you are there on the battlefield, fighting alongside your men for blood and honor.

— Matt Holmes



Peasant labor erects a temple to honor your magnificence. And these bozos are trying to destroy it!



Townspeople get religion as cathedrals go up. Be sure to take advantage of your spiritual units.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Ground-breaking campaigns; tons of new material; improvement of every feature.

LOWS: Intro movie not very impressive.

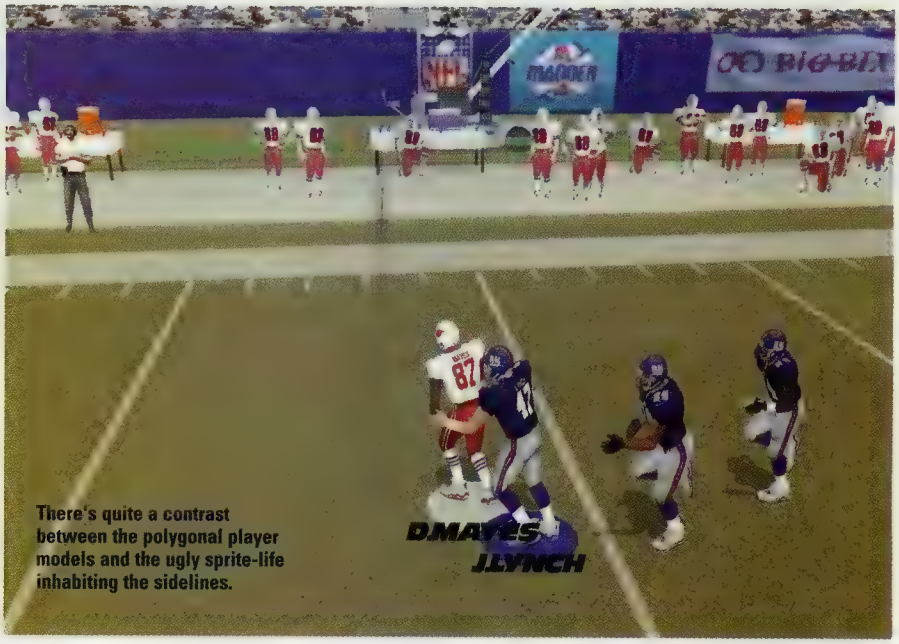
BOTTOM LINE: If you failed to get *Age of Empires II* before, you have absolutely no excuse now. This is as good as real-time strategy gets.

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE 93%

CATEGORY	Sports	REQUIRED	PII 266, 32MB RAM, 30MB hard-drive space
DEVELOPER	EA Sports	WE RECOMMEND	PII 400, 128MB RAM, 500MB hard-drive space; 3D card
PUBLISHER	EA Sports	MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS	8

Madden NFL 2001

Football fans won't be disappointed, but longtime Madden-ites will be elated and frustrated simultaneously.



There's quite a contrast between the polygonal player models and the ugly sprite-life inhabiting the sidelines.

If I had to describe my attitude as a sports game reviewer in one word, I think I would have to choose "lenient." Now, don't take that to mean I won't smack down a game that thoroughly deserves it (*Fox's NBA Basketball 2000*, which I gave a 15 percent rating, comes immediately to mind). What I mean to say is that I don't get as bent out of shape as some others do regarding minor bugs, lapses in realism, or less-than-state-of-the-art graphics. If a game is fun to play, that's what counts more than anything else. What does get my goat, though, is when known problems are continuously ignored. In this way, the Madden series is trying my patience.

Take one look at the screenshots on these pages, and you can see the highest priorities on the design team's list. The player models are absolutely spectacular, the stadiums are all sparkly, and the dirt and grime that accumulates on the uniforms is a super touch. But you know what? This game looked damn good last year. There was no need for a complete overhaul of the graphics. The reason this upsets me so much is that last year's Madden demonstrated that when the gameplay was the focus of the design time, major strides could be made. Last year's Madden was one of the best-playing football games the PC has ever seen.

Of course that means that this year's game is too, since very little has changed on the gameplay frontier, and the number of competing games comes to a grand total of none. The same, well-balanced running game is still intact, and passing, which was a tad too easy last year, has been improved thanks to some smarter secondary play by the computer. Unfortunately, all of the imperfections from last year have been carried over as well. The CPU coach still has a tough time with clock management; time outs are poorly used, and dumb play-calling can make the end of games anticlimactic.



Play a game on natural grass, and you'll see the field and players' uniforms show the effects of 22 big smelly guys romping about.





The outstanding action on the field looks even better when accompanied by a little rain or snow.

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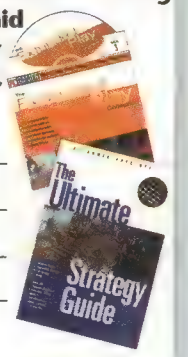
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He flies through the air with the greatest of ease...who says big men aren't agile?

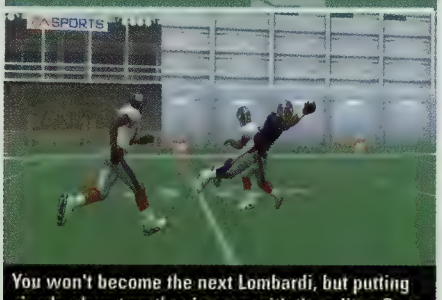


There's always time for a bit of showboating after scoring a big touchdown. C'mon ref...slap that guy with a flag, for crying out loud!

Introducing sliders to adjust everything from play-calling tendencies to the relative leg strength of the kickers was a great first step last year, but I'm sad to report that there's still no way to make individual adjustments for a lot of the categories in this year's version.

Here's another example of how just a little bit of effort could have made a huge difference. Using the default settings, teams tend to favor the pass over the run. This is especially the case once they're losing — even by as little as a field goal. Get the CPU team down by a three-spot, and it's bombs away until he catches or passes you in the scoring column. This tendency can be fixed by using the slider to increase the CPUs passion for the running game. As a side effect, though, all games that team plays against other computer opponents will feature a ridiculous amount of rushes, making a mockery of the seasonal stats. There are ways to work around this, but the lack of attention to these small details causes us to jump through hoops to correct a flaw in the game. It's very frustrating.





You won't become the next Lombardi, but putting simple plays together is easy with the editor. Once you're happy with your Xs and Os, hit the practice field to see if it actually works!

One area that did receive some much-needed attention was the interface. Last year, the folks at EA Sports would have won the "most non-intuitive" and "user-hostile" awards for interface design by a landslide. But even here, more could have been done to make it easier; options are buried within sub-menus, which are, in turn, buried within others. What has changed is that every menu choice can be activated with a mouse click, as opposed to the combination keyboard/gamepad/mouse monstrosity that served to send more than a few Madden owners over the edge last year.

Turning to the franchise mode — one of my favorite parts of the game — we see the same lack of vision. The basics are all in place, and you'll have a great time playing GM of your favorite squad. It's all here — rookie drafts, signing free agents, managing the salary cap, making trades, and overall, the computer does a fine job of running the franchises. Heck, we even get to pool all the players and redraft them for use in the franchise mode (last year you could only do this and play in a tournament), and we're given the ability to create custom leagues with our own names, logos, and jerseys. But along comes those little design bugaboos (and outright bugs) to pull us back from our fantasy world with a trout-to-the-face slap of reality. When doing a re-disbursal draft, for some odd reason you have to choose how long you have to make your selection. I can understand why you would have the option to turn this feature on, but why make it mandatory? I mean, for crying out loud...you can't even pause it if you need a bathroom break!

Reading this review up to this point, you might get the impression that I don't like this game. The truth is, it's a fantastic football game that deserves better treatment from the development team. There are several other bugs and design oddities that I've neglected to mention. Some I've heard about from fellow gamers but I haven't seen myself, and others that I have seen are supposed to be addressed in a patch that is due out shortly. If you're not as forgiving as I am when it comes to your gaming choices, you may want to steer clear (or at least make sure you find out what the patch has fixed). Either way, *Madden NFL 2001* would have been a better game in the end if only a little attention to detail was administered. As it stands, it's an excellent game with a lot of frustrating little missteps that trip it up on its way to greatness.

— Rob Smolka

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Sweet graphics; CPU plays a smart game, at least until the end; smooth online experience.

LOWS: Confusing interface; design and gameplay gripes from last year.

BOTTOM LINE: It's the only choice for PC fans, but as luck would have it, it still gets the job done.

PC GAMER EXCELLENT 83%

CATEGORY	Real-time Strategy	REQUIRED	PII 266, 32MB RAM, 250MB hard-drive space, 4X CD-ROM, 3D card
DEVELOPER	Barking Dog	WE RECOMMEND	PII 350, 128MB RAM, 32MB OpenGL-compatible 3D card
PUBLISHER	Sierra Studios	MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS	8

Homeworld: Cataclysm

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

The first "official" new episode for *PC Gamer*'s 1999 Game of the Year is a worthy addition to the field.

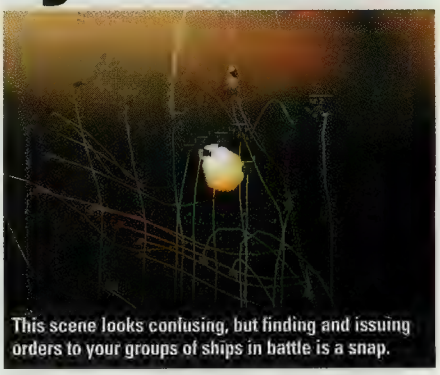
Ah, the life of a *PC Gamer* game reviewer. One moment you're incredibly depressed about the state of your favorite hobby, due to reviewing games like *Dukes of Hazzard: Racing for Home*. The next, you're convinced the evolution of the PC as a gaming platform is at its highest peak. And for that optimism I have to credit *Cataclysm* and the 20-plus hours I've spent so far lost in the Homeworld universe once again.

And "lost" is indeed the most appropriate term to use. Playing *Cataclysm*, I took no notice of the phone ringing. (Good thing, too, as it was probably Morris asking for yet another status update on this review. Or MCI asking if I want one of their cell phones. No, dammit!) I had given up shaving and, sorry to say, showers. This game cemented my evolution into *Game Geek Guy*.

Like *Homeworld* before it, this standalone expansion to the universe (it doesn't require you to own *Homeworld*) manages to launch you into the infinite regions of space, smack dab in the middle of a first-rate science fiction saga. There are nebulae, asteroid fields, planets, stars, debris, and of course, hordes of enemy ships bent on blowing you to hell and back. And every element — the story, the ships, the interface, the effects, and the wonderfully surreal and atmospheric music — blends together to suck you in like a black hole.

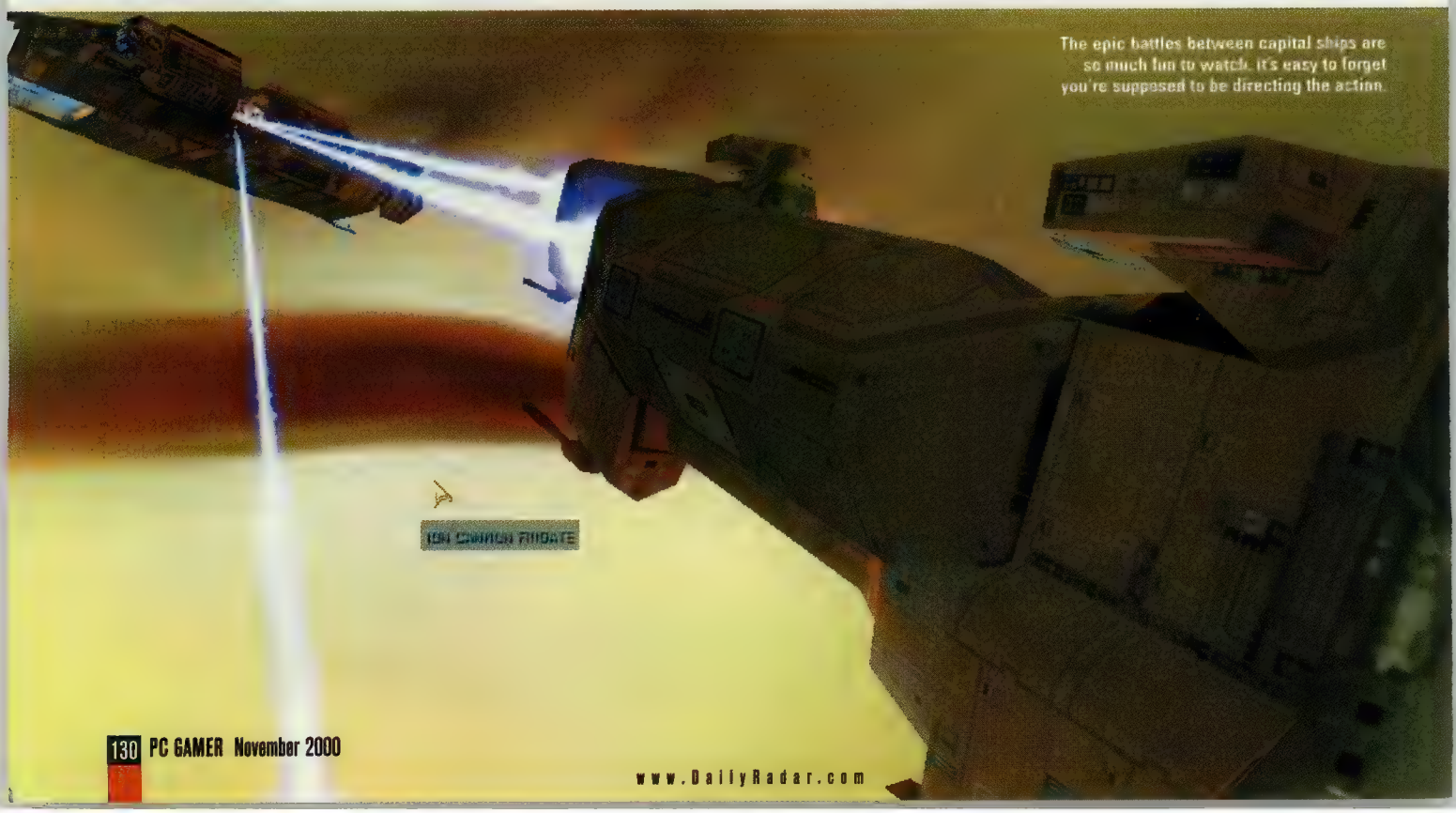
Cataclysm is set some 15 years after you led your people to your lost home planet of Hiigara in *Homeworld*. Though you've reached your goal, things are far from peaceful. Those dastardly Imperialist Taiidani and their Turanic Raider pals are still making life tough for the new Hiigarans. You find yourself on a lowly mining vessel as the leader of the Hiigaran Kiith (sect) called the Somtaaw. The discovery of a mysterious alien probe with disturbing Borg-like qualities kicks off a series of events that put you directly in the path of a murderous new alien force and Hiigara's (if not the universe's) destruction.

The story is captivating, even if it borrows heavily from such sci-fi staples as *Battlestar Galactica* and especially *Star Trek*. Known as "The Beast," Hiigara's new principal antagonist has many things in common with the Borg — and that's hella bad news for the Hiigarans. Without giving too much away, think "assimilation" and "collective." (The Beast certainly brings a lot of fun to multiplayer battles!)



This scene looks confusing, but finding and issuing orders to your groups of ships in battle is a snap.

While technically not an add-on, *Cataclysm* has all the features of an add-on. You get 18 new types of ships to command, as well as 25 new technologies, an all-new 17-mission single player campaign, and of course a variety of subtle improvements to the game interface. However, the inclusion of the original Homeworld game would have been a nice bonus for the many gamers that missed out on it the first go-around. (A *Homeworld/Cataclysm* is no doubt readying for the holiday season.)



The epic battles between capital ships are so much fun to watch, it's easy to forget you're supposed to be directing the action.

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Cataclysm features one of the most flexible view systems ever. Want to hop in the cockpit of a fighter for a first-person view of the fray? You can.

Graphically, *Cataclysm* is light years ahead of the rest of the RTS field. The textures are rich, and the pyrotechnics and weapon effects are the RTS equivalent to Industrial Light and Magic's work in the theaters. You have unparalleled control over your view, as you can pan the camera 360 degrees and zoom in and out for that perfect perspective of the action going on anywhere in a given mission. When two big fleets go at it, it's as if you're in the climactic scene of *Return of the Jedi*.

If you've not played *Homeworld* and are used to RTS games taking place on solid Earth, get ready to forget most of what you've learned. Ships can move in any direction of three-dimensional space, and thus an attack can come from any direction — above, behind, the sides, the front, or diagonally. Your commanding brain needs to work in three dimensions. Gameplay essentially revolves around your command ship, which you must protect at all costs while collecting resources, researching new technologies, and building up your fleet. This time, your command ship takes the more traditional form of a large mining vessel, which can be moved and upgraded with a variety of support modules, as opposed to the more static, boomerang-shaped *Homeworld* mothership.

The missions themselves feature a steady mix of exploration, search-and-destroy, salvage, capture, and escort goals. Each mission reveals a bit more of the plot, and each typically features a myriad of tasks to complete. Some of these objectives are critical to advancing to the next mission, others are merely a good idea to do if you want to advance the tech tree and make your life easier down the road.

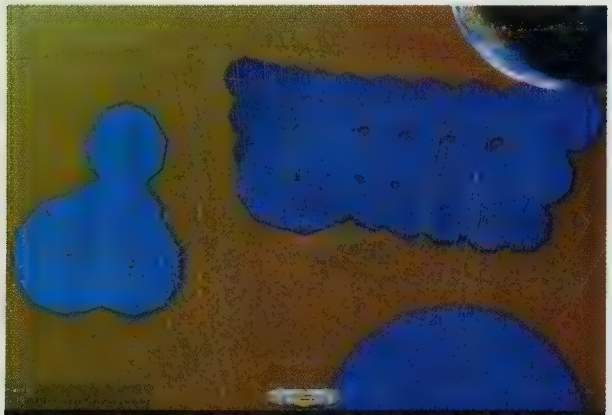
Homeworld vets should be pleased with the gameplay tweaks *Cataclysm* brings to the table. Fog of war is now implemented, meaning you'll only be able to "see" into space as far as your ship's sensors can reach. There's now a very efficient waypoint system, which was sorely missed in *Homeworld*, and you can also issue attack commands from the sensor management interface. In *Homeworld*, you had to jump back into the game to each individual unit or unit group to do this, which was time-consuming and confusing in the heat of a massive battle. A time-acceleration feature has also been added, cutting down on the boredom of those long treks from Point A to Point B. And slipgates now allow you to "jump" from Point A to Point B within a mission, the catch being you won't know where Point B is until you make the jump.

In addition to gas clouds, asteroids, and general space debris, there's a new resource to gather (and fight over in multiplayer) — crystals, which are more dense than any other resource but are extremely volatile and difficult to harvest. In the "nice touch" category, you can customize the color of your fleet and take screenshots, which will be used as background wallpaper when you load a multiplayer game.

Of the 18 new ships, perhaps the coolest is the *Somtaaw* "Leech," which as its name suggests is very small — so small, in fact, that it escapes sensor detection — and is able to latch onto the hulls of capital ships. Once fastened on, a group of Leeches can be used to spy on an enemy fleet, help your command vessel target enemy ships from long range, and to "leech" resources from the enemy ship's hull and return them to your command ship. New technology ranges from The Beast Infection Vaccine to Cloaking to the awesome Siege Cannon Weapon.

If it sounds like I'm gushing about *Cataclysm*, well, I'm okay with that — it's truly gush-worthy. It's everything *Homeworld* was, but more refined, which is saying something. Every detail has been well considered, from the story and gameplay mechanics right down to the 144-page manual. It deserves some long-term space on every strategy gamer's hard drive.

— Steve Klett



The sensor management interface lets you do cool stuff, like find your way around space, issue attack orders to your fleet, and plot your victory.

ASSIMILATION SHOWDOWN



Da Borg

Da Beast

Who would win in a no-hold's-barred battle to the death between the Borg and The Beast? Well, bad-ass as The Beast is, it's an imitation of the Borg. And while imitation may be the most sincere form of flattery, it's never as good as the real deal. Plus, nothing's as scary as a big cube in space.

Winner: Da Borg.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Stellar visuals and camera control; slick interface; cool ship designs; atmosphere.

LOWS: Steep learning curve, though not as steep as the original's.

BOTTOM LINE: A worthy follow-up to our Game of the Year for 1999.

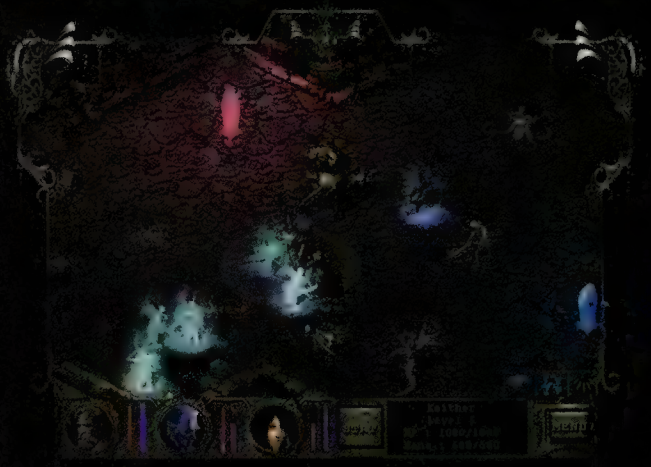
PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE 91%

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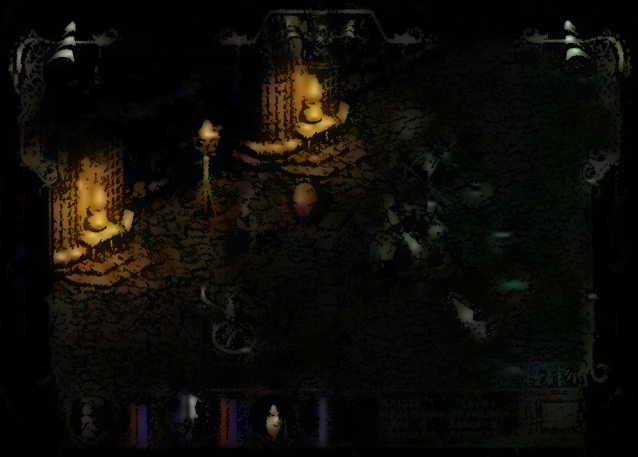

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Richter
Curian
Moonlight
Keither
COMING IN OCTOBER


this_isn't
code
it's_a
message
<they're_out there. so_are we.>

CATEGORY Simulation	REQUIRED *The Sims*, P233, 32MB RAM, 175MB hard-drive space
DEVELOPER Maxis	WE RECOMMEND 32x CD-ROM
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts	MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS None

The Sims Livin' Large

Forget about the back-stabbing "Survivor" contestants — create your own alternate reality with this add-on disc.



It costs $20 to use the heart-shaped bed, which seems pricey to me — I always thought those things cost a quarter (that's what Vederman told me, anyway).

In these days of "reality-based" TV shows, *The Sims Livin' Large* fits right in. Not happy with your own life? Load up *Livin' Large*, and you can be a flashy lounge singer or the next Bill Gates. Looking to move? Build a renaissance castle or a jungle palace, complete with leopard-print wallpaper. Want to improve your love life? Buy a heart-shaped vibrating bed and ask that special someone to join you. Okay, so no one's going to give you a million dollars for surviving 39 days on an island as you walk around semi-naked and eat rats, but you can earn some nice dough as a lifeguard or telephone psychic, and that ain't bad.

Livin' Large is all about choices. More than 100 new objects (including the best from the Web) are included, and there are more decorating choices, some fun non-player characters, new neighborhoods with a total of 50 lots, and links to 50 new Web pages.

Some of the best new stuff includes a guitar for the musicians in the family. It's a fun group activity because you'll draw a crowd while you play. There are also objects for the paranormal crowd — a genie appears when you clean the genie's lamp, and you can gaze into a crystal ball and get fortune cookie-type predictions. And for those of you that like the hunting lodge look, there are plenty of mounted dead animal wall hangings and animal skin rugs for decoration.



Time for the Tribal Council in my "Survivor" household. Kelly, Rudy, and Rich just voted Sue off the island. Kelly better watch her back.

There's a ton of cool new artwork, too, although the guinea pig picture is slightly disturbing. And be wary of hanging up the clown picture because that creepy clown will come to life and bug your sims.

Five new careers are available, and the jobs are a bit more creative this time: musician, journalist, hacker, paranormal expert, and slacker (Gervase from "Survivor" would excel at this career). I have to wonder why the developers put "games reviewer" one level below "tabloid reporter" in the journalism track — hey, what are they trying to say? And I guess I'll never know what the top slacker job is, because after working my way up from golf caddy to convenience store clerk to party DJ, I decided that being a professional slacker was too much trouble and went back to laying on the couch all day.

Alas, that's always been the problem with *The Sims*. After a while, it becomes a lot of work to keep your sims happy, clean, and well-fed, especially when you have to go to work and maintain friendships at the same time (and don't get any weekends). The gameplay hasn't been changed or modified, and the new neighborhoods look exactly the same as the original. I was hoping for a snow-covered mountain landscape or something set in outer space. I guess we'll have to wait for the sequel for such things.



Ah, the life of a slacker — laying around in your underwear watching TV while the wife is at work.

And there definitely should be a sequel. *The Sims Livin' Large* is an entertaining add-on to a wonderful game that everyone in the family will like. I used it to build my very own version of "Survivor," complete with my own vengeful Sue. Very cool.

— Lisa H. Renninger

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Tons of new objects; great new careers; the space, medieval, and jungle themes are cool.

LOWS: There's not much new in the way of gameplay; can get repetitive.

BOTTOM LINE: A great buy for *Sims* junkies; and if you missed the first one, go out and buy both.

PC GAMER EXCELLENT 85%

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GENRE	Action-adventure	REQUIRED	PII 300, 64MB RAM, 4x CD-ROM, 400MB hard-drive space, 3D card
DEVELOPER	Monolith	WE RECOMMEND	PII 450, 128MB RAM
PUBLISHER	Fox Interactive	MAXIMUM PLAYERS	8

Sanity: Aiken's Artifact

Ice-T plus magical psychic combat? That's the best of all possible worlds! Sign me up right this second!

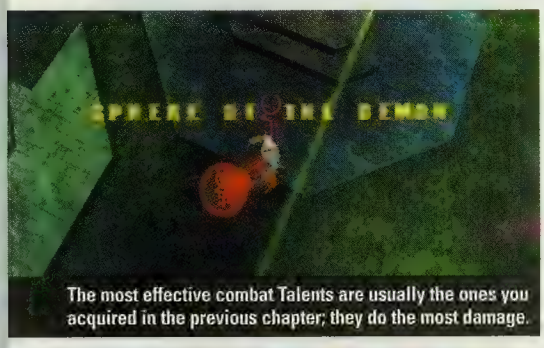


Sanity's free-floating camera allows you to zoom in for close-ups, but you probably won't use it much.

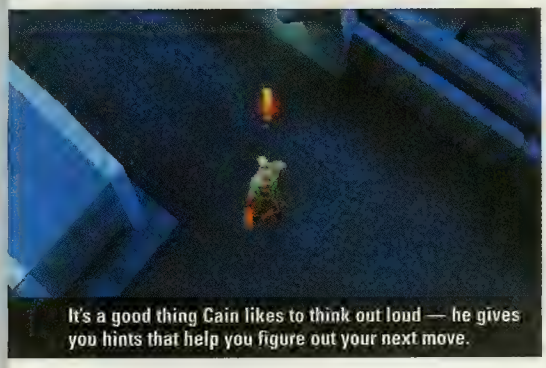
Collectible card games aren't new to the PC, but the vast majority have been merely faithful translations of the original card games that inspired them. Except for the flawed *Magic: The Gathering — Battlemage*, no PC card-based game has attempted to combine the excitement of real-time action with the subtle complexities of deck-building.

But that's precisely the design embraced by Monolith for *Sanity: Aiken's Artifact*, and the result is one of the most entertaining action-adventures of the year.

Thanks to the discovery of a mysterious artifact nearly 30 years in the future, a researcher named Dr. Joan Aiken creates a serum that gives humans access to latent psionic powers. To fight the rising tide of criminals with psionic powers, the government forms the Department of National Psionic Control and recruits the most powerful psionics; your character, Cain, is one of them. Too bad your brother Abel is at least as strong — and a villain.



The most effective combat Talents are usually the ones you acquired in the previous chapter; they do the most damage.



It's a good thing Cain likes to think out loud — he gives you hints that help you figure out your next move.

You might be the king daddy of psionics, but you can't do a thing until you find or are given specific Talents (powers) — and using each Talent affects your sanity. When your sanity meter drops below zero, you stagger around losing health points until it rises.

Cain's adventures begin with a simple investigation into the machinations of psychic hotline queen Priscilla Divine, but suspicious events take him to a theater in the heart of a city, Dr. Aiken's research center, a demon-infested mansion, a power plant, and a meat-packing facility. You see all this from a rotating, overhead perspective with a somewhat limited view — more than once, enemies will attack from off-screen.

Ice-T's burly vocalizations for Cain seem too faux-cool as the game opens, but he grows on you with each pyrotechnic encounter as more villains are dispatched. You'll also find some subtly humorous dialogue here, especially if you take time to read the minds of the wandering malcontents populating the levels.

In case you haven't figured it out by now, the Talents are the cards you collect and trade with other players for multiplayer games. *Sanity* ships with 81 Talents; two more originals are on this month's *PCG* disc (see page 8), and two Talents Packs (five in each) are currently available for purchase. Monolith has already created 20 more that will be distributed in a variety of ways.

Though Deathmatch is the only multiplayer game mode supported, the mile-a-minute action and wonderful variety of attacks, defenses, and special abilities make it a refreshing change of pace from first-person deathmatches. The maps are relatively small, and with a full complement of eight players dashing around the frenetic pace and visceral effects make for some thrilling encounters. Game match-ups are handled via a seamless WON.NET interface.

Sanity isn't without its problems, of course. Besides problems of perspective and control, there are a couple of dubious game-logic issues — Cain beats up a civilian for a visitor's pass when such an action should cost you the game, and a butler once spotted me even though I was invisible — and some of the chapter-ending "boss" battles are frustratingly long. But it never fails: just when you're feeling frustrated, you'll solve a puzzle or come up with a powerful combination of Talents and find yourself grinning. *Sanity* will give you your money's worth — and that's a fancy way of saying it's pretty damn good.

— Stephen Poole

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Big environments; great variety of combat options; mile-a-minute multiplayer.

LOWS: The perspective and interface can make combat and exploration more difficult than need be.

BOTTOM LINE: Not as groundbreaking as it could have been, but still an excellent game.

PC GAMER EXCELLENT 81%

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Diablo II image courtesy of Blizzard Entertainment.

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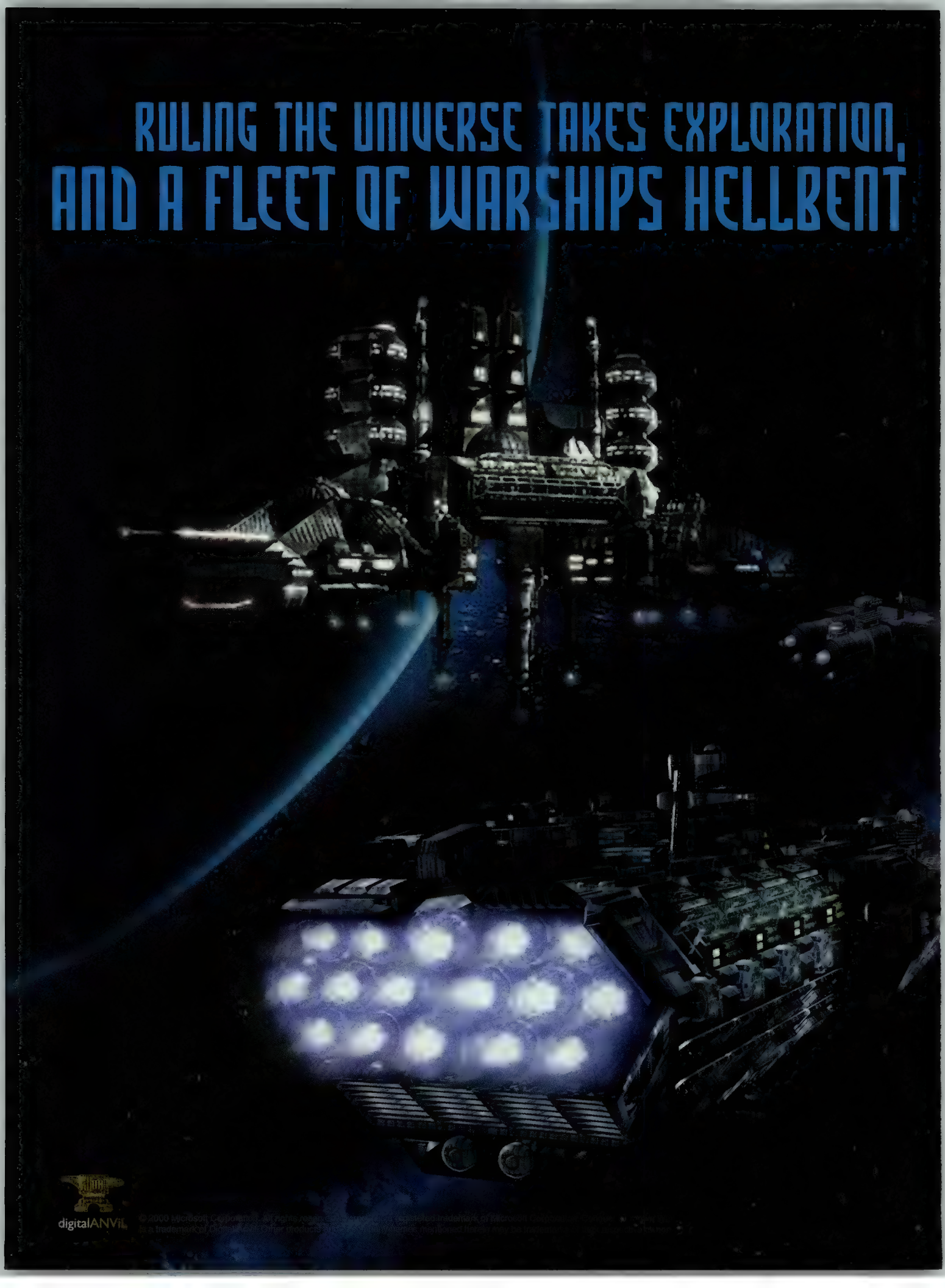
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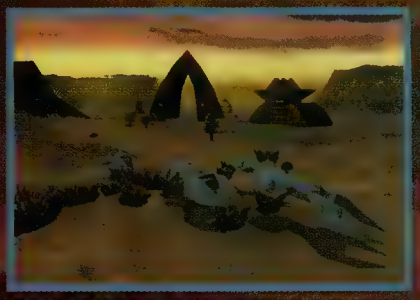
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Animated Violence

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GENRE Racing	REQUIRED PII 266 *or* AMD K6-2, 32MB RAM, 80MB hard-drive space
DEVELOPER MicroProse	WE RECOMMEND PIII 450 or AMD Athlon, 64MB RAM, 320MB hard drive space
PUBLISHER Hasbro	MAXIMUM PLAYERS 6

Grand Prix 3

Although this game was four years in the making, it's worth the wait for racing fans eager to get back out on the track.



Damage modeling is present in the game, but you will need to hit things awfully damn hard in order to break something.

Geoff Crammond has become an almost mythical figure to legions of PC Formula One racing fans around the globe. As the code-meister behind MicroProse's groundbreaking *Formula One Grand Prix* title in the early 1990s and the equally revered *Grand Prix 2* of four years ago, Crammond has almost single-handedly controlled the development and direction of the modern F1 racing sim. His latest offering, *Grand Prix 3*, is easily the most-anticipated PC racing title of the past few years and, while it may not be quite as revolutionary as his previous two efforts, it is nevertheless a very solid product that carries the unmistakable Crammond stamp.

Grand Prix 3 is a rather curious amalgam of Old World artistry and modern technology. While it succeeds at bringing the MicroProse franchise's aging 3D graphics engine into the 21st century, the game's support for current-generation video cards is less than enthusiastic. *GP3*'s cockpit and track visuals are extremely crisp — stunningly attractive even — but no real attempt has been made to maximize the potential of high-end 3D accelerator cards like NVIDIA's GeForce 2 or 3dfx's Voodoo5. Resolutions are limited to 1280x1024, and the maximum attainable framerate speed has been capped at a languid 25.6 fps. Exotic lens flare effects and similar graphic advances that have been a staple in competing titles like UbiSoft's *Monaco GP* are also conspicuous by their absence. In fact, *GP3* has its roots so firmly entrenched in a bygone era of DOS-based games that it manages to look almost as good in software-rendered mode as it does with 3D-acceleration switched on!

Despite all it concedes in graphic sophistication and complexity, *GP3* more than makes up for it in straight-ahead entertainment and immersion value. Although there are plenty of F1 racing titles around from companies like EA, UbiSoft, Eidos, and Psygnosis, Crammond's latest project humbles every last one of them in pure gameplay caliber. Considering *GP3*'s impressive pedigree, this really isn't surprising, either.

The game features licensed teams, tracks and drivers from the 1998 F1 season (which unfortunately means that there's no 2000 U.S. GP Indy track), and it communicates the experience of competing at motor sport's highest level more convincingly than any other current title.

One of the key contributors to this state of affairs is *GP3*'s amazing dynamic weather effects. Other F1 games have produced acceptable wet racing environments, but *GP3* factors in the capricious nature of real-world weather in a manner that will blow away even the most jaded of racing fans. It isn't uncommon to be competing in a qualifying or race session where part of the circuit is awash with heavy rain while other sections remain bone dry. Even when the sun is smiling on you, there is no guarantee that a sudden rain cloud won't move in and douse all or part of the track before you can make it into the pits for a change of rubber.



Unlike their American NASCAR counterparts, F1 drivers love to do it in the rain.



Perhaps this guy's wearing a mask because he doesn't want to be associated with a lunatic driver like you.



Apart from the paint jobs, there is no discernable difference between each car's body style or dashboard.

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GP3 highlights the 1998 F1 season, so while you will get to race on this track, you can't race at the new U.S. Grand Prix circuit in Indianapolis.

This adds a wonderful strategic element to the sim, and some tremendous nail-biting scenarios as you struggle for a quick qualifying time during a short dry weather window or attempt to defend your hard-fought track position on a drying track against an opponent on freshly mounted slicks.

The physics modeling in *GP3* is also quite well done and convincingly conveys the sense of piloting a high-powered F1 machine with an enormous surplus of aerodynamic downforce. Apart from a curious anomaly where slamming on the brakes can straighten out a spinning car (the opposite would occur in real life), *GP3* delivers an extremely responsive driving model that can go wheel to wheel with just about any other modern F1 sim on the market.

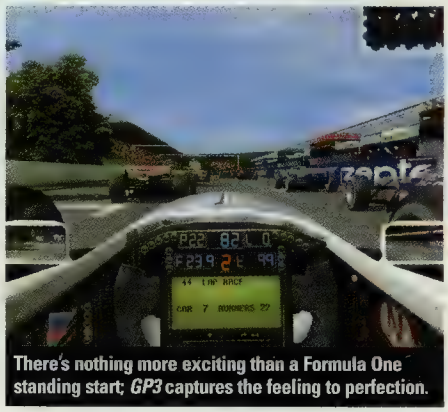
An exhaustively detailed garage menu will keep the gearheads going for months, while rookie drivers can dial up eight different driving aids for a more user-friendly ride. Force feedback is also supported with this release, but unfortunately there's no provision to run a split-axis throttle and brake setup to facilitate a trail-braking option for wheel and pedal owners.

Much of *GP3*'s rich gameplay depth can also be attributed to its wonderfully tuned AI. Inconsistent or situationally brain-dead AI drivers have ruined many a racing title in the past, but when the computer-controlled competition in this sim fight you for position, they do so with a consistency and a tenacity that elevates the game to an entirely new level. Five separate difficulty settings are available to offer a fair contest for all gamers, regardless of their personal skill levels.

What's more, *GP3* also incorporates arbitrary mechanical breakdowns and unpredictable AI driving errors to further heighten the game's sense of realism. Crammond's attention to detail was really driven home to me during one race when I cut my fuel window a little too fine and was rewarded with a sputtering engine on the last corner before the main straight. The engine fired up briefly again on the ensuing straightaway before dying altogether a few hundred yards short of the finish line. I still managed to coast across the line in first place because, unbeknownst to me, my closest rival had experienced a fatal engine blow-up directly behind me! As I said before, nail-biting stuff.

It's just as well that the game's AI is as strong as it is, because multiplayer fans won't be happy to learn that *GP3* offers no support for online Internet play. Modem-to-modem and LAN hookups for up to six people are included, but the decision to exclude any workable Internet connectivity is sure to strike a sour note with many online racing enthusiasts.

GP3 also ships with a few other minor hitches. The game's damage modeling is much too forgiving to be taken seriously; only 20 seconds worth of non-saveable replay footage can be pulled up at any one time; and no audio effects can be heard from any of the AI cars while out on the track. While none of these issues are game-killers in their own right, collectively they are still significant enough to prevent a much higher rating for the title.


There's nothing more exciting than a Formula One standing start; *GP3* captures the feeling to perfection.

Some early critics have disparagingly labeled Crammond's latest work *"GP2.5"* due to its evolutionary rather than revolutionary advances on *Grand Prix 2*. While this is a somewhat valid point insofar as the new title's technological development is concerned, it simply doesn't do justice to the game's tremendous attention to detail and remarkable sense of immersion. Despite its occasional misfires, *Grand Prix 3* still manages to pull ahead as the new World Champion of Formula One racing games.

— Andy Mahood

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Exceptional AI; dynamic weather; exhaustive setup options; scalable skill levels.

LOWS: No Internet multiplayer support; no engine audio from AI opponents; forgiving damage modeling.

BOTTOM LINE: Not the most advanced F1 sim on the market, but the most immersive and enjoyable.

PC GAMER EXCELLENT 84%

ANTHOLOGY OF A RACING FRANCHISE

Few PC racing games have had the global impact of Geoff Crammond's long-running Grand Prix series. Beginning with his revolutionary *F1 Grand Prix* release in 1992 (titled *World Circuit* in North America) and extending through to 1996's equally groundbreaking *Grand Prix 2*, the series has developed into one of the most successful PC racing franchises in history. (*GP2* went on to sell an impressive 1.5 million copies worldwide).







Some very encouraging news for fans of Crammond's work is that they will not have to wait another four years to see the next chapter. Hasbro/MicroProse recently signed a five-year multi-title deal with both Crammond and the FOA (F1's licensing body) to produce future games covering the F1 seasons from 1999 to 2002. Fans should therefore expect to see *GP4*, *5*, and *6* landing on retail shelves at a much-improved frequency in the years ahead.

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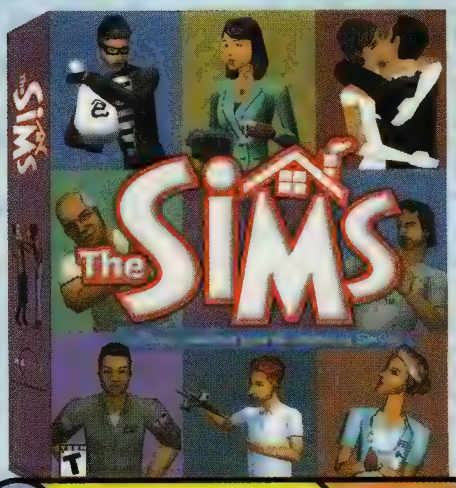


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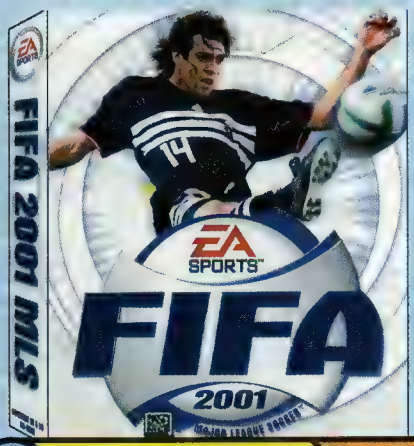
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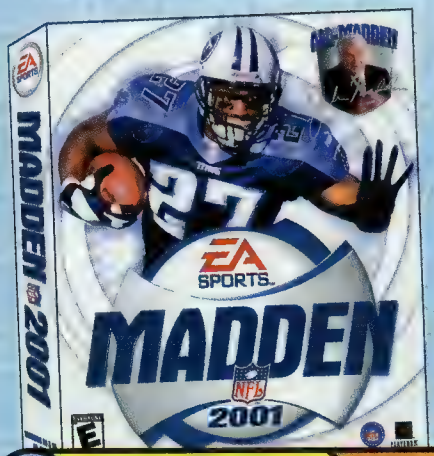


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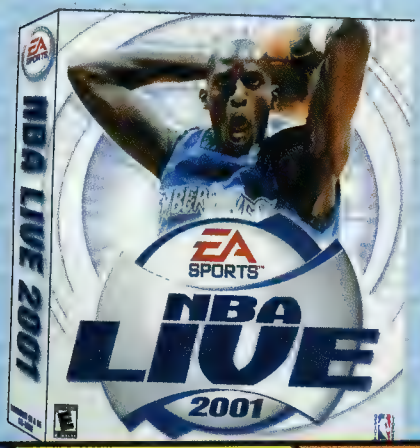
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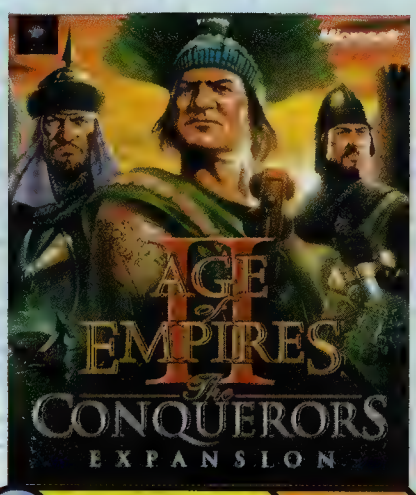


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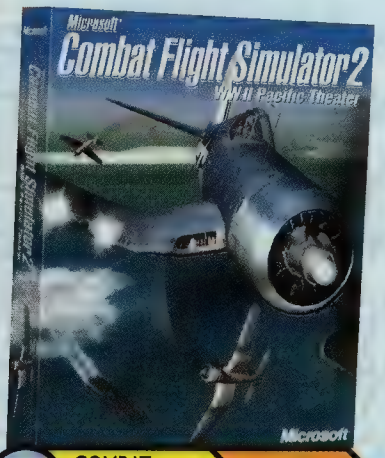
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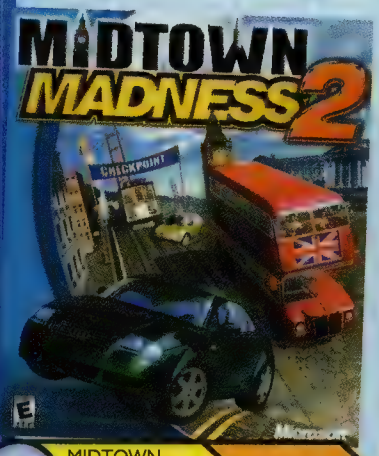
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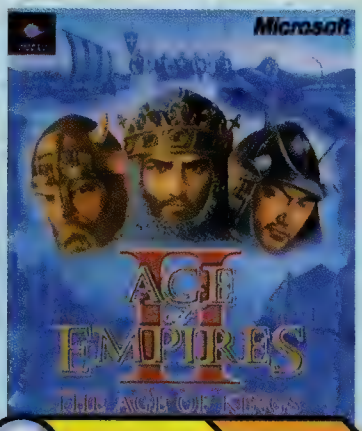
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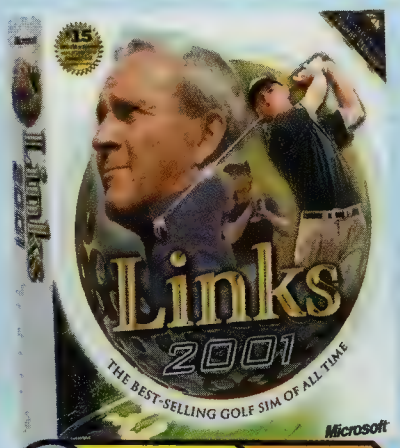
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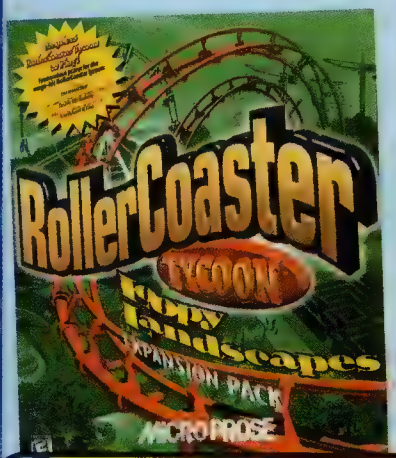
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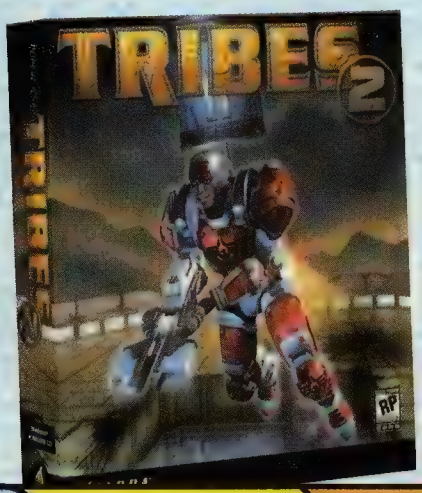
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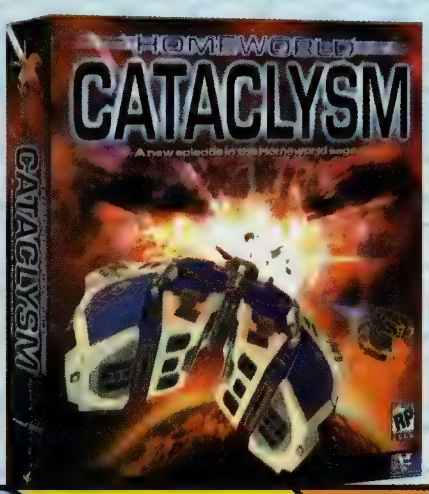


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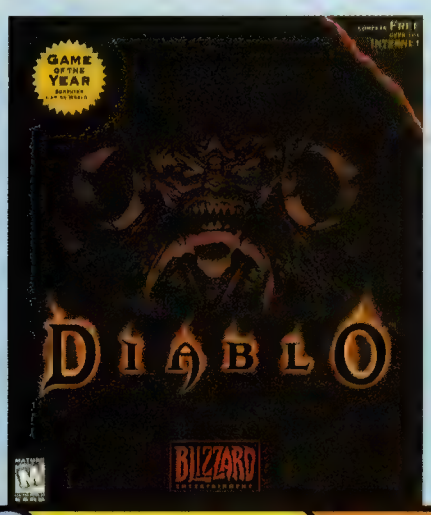
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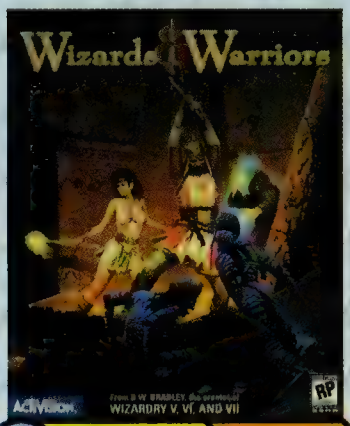
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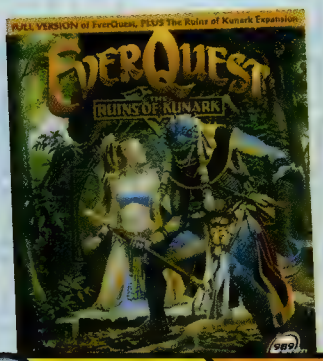


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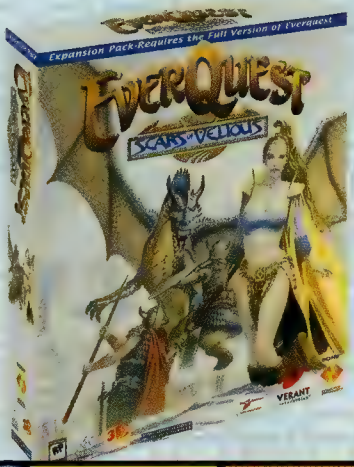
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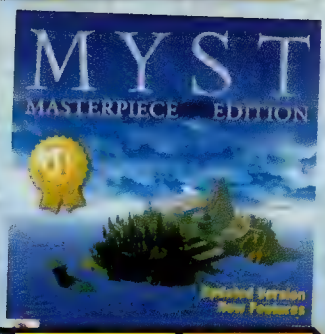
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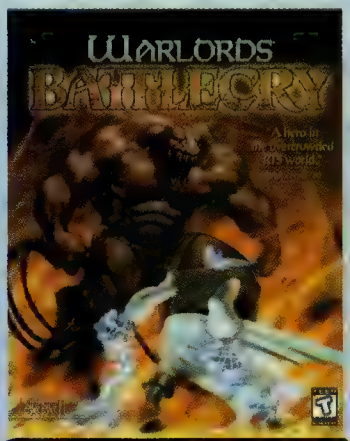
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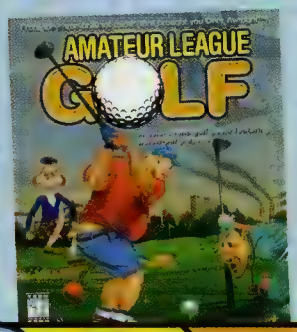
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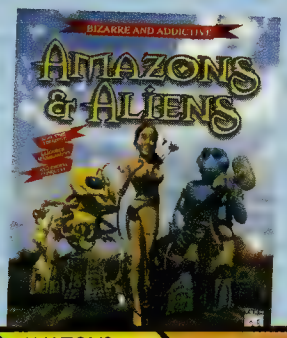
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CATEGORY Sports	REQUIRED P233, 64MB RAM, 50MB hard-drive space
DEVELOPER ATD	WE RECOMMEND PIII 500, 128MB RAM, 3D accelerator card
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive	MAXIMUM PLAYERS 8

Sydney 2000

Run! Jump! Dive! Band aid! First you can exercise your fingers and then you can invest in a new keyboard.



I have never seen an international spear-throwing champion on a Wheaties box, and this ain't gonna be the poster girl.

It's Olympics time again, and you know what that means: you're not gonna be able to find a beer in Sydney for under 10 bucks. I plan on sidestepping the unavoidable onslaught of shameless marketing tie-ins, product placement, and manufactured controversy by tuning my TV to re-runs of "The A-Team".

Fortunately, you'll find no performance-enhancing drugs, racist bellyaching, or whining losers in Eidos' *Sydney 2000*, a spunky collection of mini-games that strives to recapture the fun of Epyx's classic Summer Games series. Coming to us from the UK's ATD (developers of the surprisingly fun *Rollcage*), *Sydney* features a dozen Summer Olympic events that range in quality from godawful to kinda-sorta-maybe fun.

Each of the twelve events is quickly learned, as the game is courteous enough to give you a run-down on the controls during the loading screens. Most events are simple, timing-based affairs that require you to mash buttons like a fiend (to build up speed or power), then hit another button to trigger an event (throwing a hammer, leaping a hurdle, or lifting a weight). A word of warning: a gamepad is your best choice for this game, as the incessant button-pounding may very well KO your standard keyboard.

But how do the games stack up? Some of the events have that evilly addictive hook that keeps you playing time after time — the Platform Diving and High Jump manage to retain the fun for a good while. On the other hand, there are plenty of exercises in frustration, such as the barely controllable skeet shooting event (but be thankful that it didn't ship as a stand-alone game from HeadGames or WizardWorks). And then there are the games that simply require you to mash keys like there's no tomorrow. I suggest you drink a two-liter bottle of Jolt before attempting the 100m freestyle swimming or 100m and 110m hurdle running events.

Though most players will opt to play their favorite game over and over and strive for a world record, a handful of modes attempt to link all the events together. The Olympic Mode gives you a sense of progression as you create an athlete, moving through multiple performance trials and keys-a-mashin' training sequences.

The game's multiplayer component is pretty solid, allowing up to four players to get in on the action via daisy-chained joysticks or a shared keyboard. Unfortunately, *Sydney* has the feel of a quick port from the Sega Dreamcast, with console quirks in the menus.

Graphically, *Sydney 2000* isn't good or bad — it's just kinda...weird. The characters don't look like your typical polygonal athletes; they possess the odd texture of Claymation figures. If you can ignore this (and the fact that the female models have bulging groins larger than the male athletes'), you'll be treated to some of the slickest animation seen on a PC — ATD motion-captured Olympic athletes for guaranteed realism, and darned if they don't move like the real thing.

Audio-wise, the game's fine. The in-game commentary is plentiful and professionally performed, referring to the players by the name of their country, or by the odd-sounding "Player 1." And it's enjoyable to hear the announcers' reactions whenever you totally screw the pooch.

All in all, *Sydney*'s quality is disturbingly inconsistent, and there are, sadly, more bad games than good in this particular collection. While we would play Epyx games for hours on end back in the olden days, you've gotta admit that we were a good deal more easily amused back then. If you want to recreate the Olympic experience, break into the local high school track and run a few laps, or hop into the La-z-boy with a big tub of popcorn and leave it to the professionals...er, amateurs.

— Colin Williamson



Entering water at thirty degree angle = world of hurt. Expect the announcers to laugh at you for this one.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Some of the mini-games are good, solid fun. Note: *some* of them are fun.

LOWS: Button-mashing isn't as much fun as it used to be, and the repetition gets old quick.

BOTTOM LINE: Well, there's always the 2004 edition to look forward to.

PC GAMER 52%

MERELY OKAY

www.DailyRadar.com

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Microsoft

CATEGORY Roleplaying	REQUIRED P100, 12MB RAM, 20MB hard-drive space
DEVELOPER Spiderweb Software	WE RECOMMEND Being in another room when the game is running.
PUBLISHER Spiderweb Software	MAXIMUM PLAYERS None

Avernum

Hard-drinking rock crooner Bon Scott died in a pool of his own yuke, but not before he sang "Hell Ain't A Bad Place To Be." He was referring to the hell of interpersonal relationships; had he been commenting on the roleplaying hell of *Avernum*, the song would have been titled, "My God, Somebody Please Tear My Eyes Out And Stomp On Them."Some games possess a sort of sublime badness that transcends itself into an inexplicable goodness. *Avernum* is not one of them. With ugly graphics, tedious point-and-click gameplay, and a deathly dull storyline, *Avernum* even manages to escape the dubious honor of infamy.

"*Avernum*," we are told, "is a classic fantasy roleplaying game, designed for anyone who longs for an epic quest, enjoys a fascinating tale, or misses the classic days of Ultima and Wizardry." To be honest, this is perhaps the most egregious use of the word "classic" ever. It is also the first, and last time "classic" and *Avernum* will ever be conjoined.

You take the role of a malcontent cast into the underworld of *Avernum* for crimes against the wicked Emperor Hawthorne. Since misery loves company, you can form a four-person party cobbled up from one of nine classes (soldier, berserker, archer, hedge wizard, shaman, rogue, etc.) or birthed from a "Create Custom Player" option. There are 19 different attributes and skills, from Strength to the obscure Cave Lore (maybe my favorite RPG statistic ever). Because the game is as dumb as a lobotomized mule, some categories more or less track the same attribute, such as Endurance (which the game says measures "How hardy you are") and Hardiness (yes, an entirely different stat).



It's a hard-knock life when even the gender unspecific refuse to speak with you.

You point and click the static characters to get them to navigate, with the scenery shifting to simulate movement — very 1983. While the character models and game environments are blandly competent, the sum of *Avernum*'s graphical parts add up to about zero.

Past the graphic dullery, the game even trips over the most simple of roleplaying staples. Poorly designed icons defeat any sort of intended utility; the "look" icon is ostensibly an eye, but it appears to be drawn as a leaping fish with a bullet hole in its gut. A "fire missile" command is executed by clicking on what seems to be a cursive "X," — a lame bow and arrow with no string. Turn-based combat is hampered by extended pauses while the computer conjures up another brilliant strategy (namely, "attack").

We strongly advise not bothering with this game. Next to *Avernum*, hell ain't a bad place to be.

— Greg Orlando

DEATH BY YUKE


BON SCOTT The first singer for AC/DC was dead at age 33, shortly after recording the song "Highway to Hell." He basically got wasted and had enough alcohol in him to kill two men. His was a particularly nasty yuke death.


JIMI HENDRIX He overdosed on barbiturates at age 27, and choked on the resulting yuke. Only a few days before his death, he told a reporter that he had been dead a long time and that he didn't think he would live to be 28.


JOHN BONHAM The drummer of Led Zeppelin died of asphyxiation on his own putrid yuke, after more than 40 shots of vodka in 12 hours.

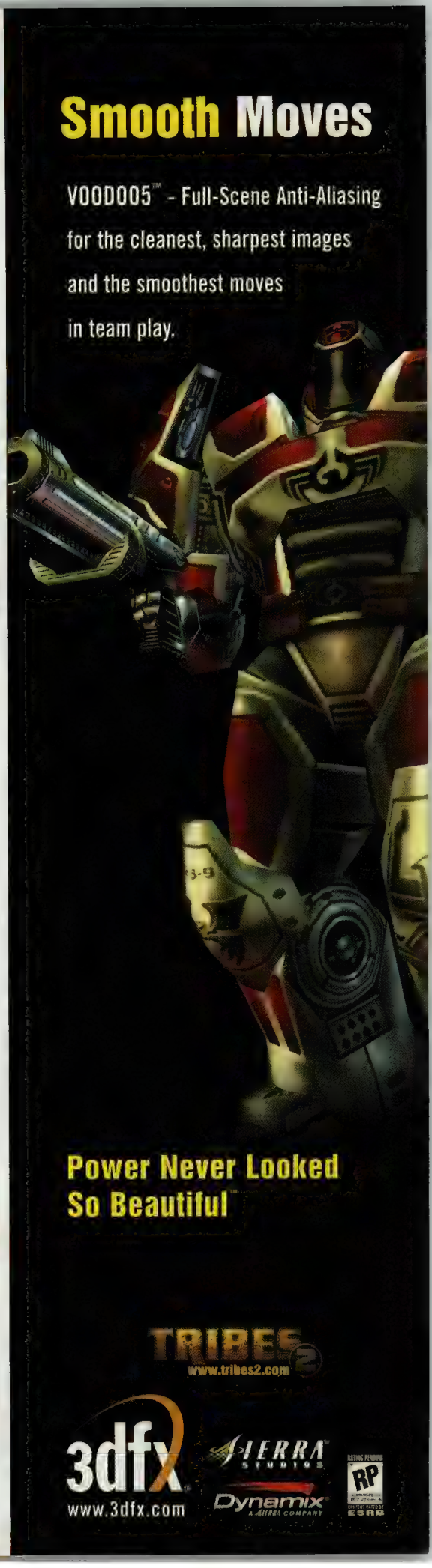
FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Contains elements of actual gameplay such as characters and monsters to fight.

LOWS: Assumes that man can escape from a Hell of his own making — and then puts him there.

BOTTOM LINE: In the vein of "if you can't say something nice"...

PC GAMER 17%
DON'T BOTHER



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CATEGORY	Simulation	REQUIRED	P166, 32MB RAM, 100MB hard-drive space
DEVELOPER	Monte Cristo	WE RECOMMEND	The minimum specs will get it done. Trust us.
PUBLISHER	Monte Cristo	MAXIMUM PLAYERS	4

Wall Street Trader 2001

Monte Cristo has created a formula for economic simulations — keep the financial analysis in the computer's hands, and amuse players by letting them loose with the more entertaining game elements (like hiring/firing employees and decorating the offices). It's proven successful with products like *Start-Up 2000* (reviewed last month), but in *Wall Street Trader 2001,* it runs into a snag.

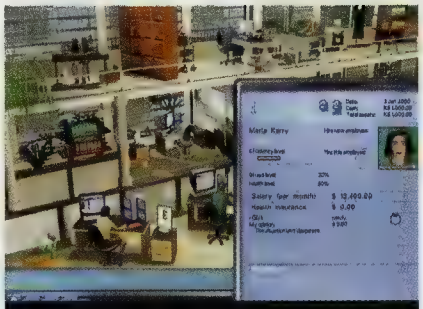
You hire some personnel — a lawyer, a spy, a press agent, an analyst, several brokers — but otherwise, gameplay focuses entirely on stocks. Now, there are few things Americans find more glamorous than money, but fewer things less sexy than the act of buying or selling options, futures, and shares on the stock market.

Trader 2001 is ostensibly based on last year's *Trader 2000* (duh!), but it actually feels like a lesser prototype for the earlier game. *Trader 2000* placed you in direct and claustrophobic competition with three AI-driven opponents, trying to raise the most money in a multi-scenario campaign. (They also occasionally "E-mail" their comments and insults.) By removing these opponents, single-player *Trader 2001* mode feels less vital and real. The original also supplied a fair amount of colorfully displayed and interesting background material on each stock offering; this, too, has been removed from *Trader 2001*. You might as well be buying the value of pi as a stock in the newer game — it's that abstract.

The graphics in *Trader 2001* are almost contemptuously primitive. The world's individual stock markets, for instance, are represented as three poorly painted, static backdrops before which a few generic stick figures wave their arms. All the people you hire, including the women, are given a generic male suit-wearing form. The bulletins you receive on your laptop's News Center offer the best visuals, but even these lack the original's flair, with its clever use of stock news footage, real-world logos, and dramatic animation.



If this is the Tokyo Stock Exchange, then my grandmother was Cornelius Vanderbilt.



Pay attention to proper *feng shui* in order to provide the most ergonomic work place.

In place of AI-driven opponents, *Trader 2001* supports multiplayer mode via the Internet, direct modem link, or serial port connection. It's just not enough to sell this empty product, however. If you want a stock market sim, purchase *Trader 2000*. Or send me a few shares of Intel for my next birthday, and I'll let you know how they do.

— Barry Brenesal

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Unlimited replayability; good multiplayer and Internet options.

LOWS: Sub-standard graphics; no AI opposition in single-player mode; no background or financial info.

BOTTOM LINE: An unnecessary dumbing-down of *Wall Street Trader 2000.*

PC GAMER 35%

DON'T BOTHER




Once upon a time, millions of innocent PC game fanatics were exposed to one of the most violent and wickedly fierce FPS games ever.
See what happens when they are forced to SIN again!
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CATEGORY Action	REQUIRED P233, 32MB RAM, 850MB hard-drive space, 3D accelerator card
DEVELOPER Gremlin	WE RECOMMEND PII 350, 1.3GB hard-drive space, 32MB 3D accelerator
PUBLISHER Interplay	MAXIMUM PLAYERS None

Soulbringer



The delicious graphics during combat are only a part of what makes this game a keeper for *Diablo II* fans.

Hard on the heels of *Diablo II* comes the American release of a European *Diablo* clone, *Soulbringer*. Poor timing? Yes — couldn't be worse. But game quality? If you're a fan of the Diablo series, it doesn't get much better (unless, of course, you count *Diablo*).

Soulbringer provides one of the most advanced uses of a *Diablo*-style engine yet seen in action games. All the characters are large and detailed, every animation is smooth as silk, and you can see every movement using the full-3D camera rotation. The snow falling in Madrigal looks exactly like real snow — you'll even leave a trail of footsteps in it, and find them covered over when you return.

Combat modeling offers a degree of visual precision and detail that I've never seen in a computer game, and it's well-exploited by the creatures' varied attack options. Characters with a high combat rating have a selection of up to five attack types with each weapon. You can also create macros for a series of attack types, even adding multiple weapons to a single macro.

There isn't really a story to give these action mechanics a true purpose; you just get the usual bunch of Undead Greater Evil Beings terrorizing a generic fantasy world. Its statistics engine relies on the standard fare: strength, speed (governing defense), combat, health (actually your maximum life points), and magic.

Far more impressive is the game's distinctive magic system. Spells are acquired by locating or purchasing spellbooks. Each book usually contains spells related to several of the five major elements: fire, water, earth, air, and spirit. Repeatedly casting spells in a given element gradually "attunes" you to it, improving the results, and decreasing damage taken from that element in battle. Conversely, you suffer more damage from spells of the opposing element.

As much as this provides a welcome degree of personal configurability to your character, *Soulbringer* remains a very linear game, with nearly all quests centering unimaginatively on killing a boss monster surrounded by plenty of henchmen. There are a few minor sub-quests, but these neither affect the direction of events nor provide significant experience gains. Dialogue is only for the purpose of conveying information. It feels like a lot is missing. With its wonderful graphics, combat, and magic system, I kept daydreaming of what Guido Henkel (*Planescape: Torment*) or Richard Garriott (in his *Ultima VII* period) could have made of this game.

There are several technical problems, too. When a new area loads, for instance (and house interiors count as new areas) while you're facing east, your character will be facing west upon entering. You also have to do a full, 1.3GB installation to hear voiceovers and music — which isn't mentioned anywhere in the product.

Still, *Soulbringer* is a beautiful, atmospheric game, the most ambitious of *Diablo*-style clones. It's got enough in it to keep *Diablo* fans happy until *Diablo III* (ha!).

— Barry Brenesal

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Beautiful graphics; many combat moves; groovy magic system; cool combat macros.

LOWS: Linear in the bad way; massive install necessary for voiceovers and music; predictable story.

BOTTOM LINE: *Diablo* fans will love the combat options, sophisticated magic, and quality graphics.

PC GAMER 72% GOOD



CATEGORY	Real-time Strategy	REQUIRED	PII 300, 64MB RAM, 400MB hard-drive space, 16MB 3D accelerator card
DEVELOPER	14 Degrees East	WE RECOMMEND	PIII 600, 128MB RAM
PUBLISHER	Interplay	MAXIMUM PLAYERS	3

Star Trek: New Worlds

The Star Trek license boldly goes where *everyone* has gone before, into the world of humdrum real-time strategy.



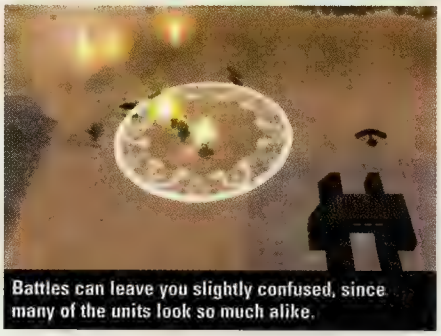
First, a complaint: How can you set a real-time ground combat strategy game in the Star Trek universe during the Classic Trek era, and *not* allow players to command an army of Red Shirts? You know, the security officers whose only purpose was to die dramatically before the first commercial break? What was Interplay thinking?

As much as I think a Red Shirt versus Salt Sucker match-up is a no-brainer, *Star Trek: New Worlds* takes a more conventional road. Set right after the events in *Star Trek V: Shatner's Folly*, the story begins when a Romulan vessel testing an experimental weapon accidentally creates a rupture in subspace. This boo-boo has an unexpected side-effect: entire systems of new planets suddenly appear in previously unoccupied Neutral Zone space. Designated the "Tabula Rasa," the systems are rich in Dilithium and other resources, causing the Federation, Klingons, and Romulans to squabble over land rights. It's a great, if somewhat cliched, setup, but the game never quite lives up to its inherent potential.

Anyone versed in Trek philosophy knows that the three groups have different modus operandi: the Federation is defensive, Klingons are aggressive, and Romulans are sneaky sons-of-bitches. However, with the exception of the Romulans having cloaking technology in two of their units and the Klingons having it in one of theirs, all units, weapons, and buildings are virtually identical. While the single-player missions (14 per race) lead you to believe that you're adhering to the principles of your race, the goals are pretty much the same: protect yourself, scan things, kill others. Greater diversity between the races would've made the game much more interesting.

As alluded to before, infantry is not part of the equation. Vehicles (scout ships, science vehicles, tanks, etc.) do all the dirty work, making the conflicts bloodless and rather sterile. Mining is accomplished by using your tricorder (doubling as the level map) to locate areas heavy in minerals and then plopping down a mining station; the rest is handled automatically by worker units. Unfortunately, there are only three camera views in the game: close, closer, and a 3D first-person "get that building out of my face" view that looks pretty in screenshots but has no practical gameplay function. More zoom options are badly needed. The interface itself is more complicated than it should be, leaving you scratching your head over such dilemmas as: "How much more Duranium do I need to build a Phaser Tank?" An intelligent interface would tell you the answer; here, you have to do the calculations yourself.

Tech advancements are made by building science stations, sick bays, and security centers, giving you access to phasers, photons, disruptor turrets, and the usual "Trek"-nobabble. But since all the units are tiny and shaped like shuttlecraft, distinguishing between them isn't easy. Multiplayer fans may also feel beamed (the Trek term for "shafted") because you're limited to three players.



Battles can leave you slightly confused, since many of the units look so much alike.

In the TV shows, disputes like these are usually taken care of with a starship and a well-aimed photon torpedo. I wish that had been added to the tech tree.

— Chuck Osborn

KLINGON ME SOFTLY

Everything we know about Klingon combat we learned in kindergarten.

1. **THE EARLY BULLY GETS THE MONEY**
Klingons strike early and often. Stage an attack on the enemy before they get a chance to build defenses.

2. **THE FASTEST WAY TO AN ENEMY'S HEART IS THROUGH HIS RIBCAGE**
Don't sneak around like a cowardly Romulan. Pick a flank and attack, attack, *attack*!

3. **EVERYDAY IS A GOOD DAY TO DIE**
Don't waste time. Build science and security stations ASAP so you can get the big guns.

NEXT MONTH
Words of wisdom from *Gagh Soup For The Klingon Soul*.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Star Trek finally stages an insurrection into the *StarCraft*-style RTS genre; nice planet variety.

LOWS: Not as simple, diverse, or Trek-ky as it should be; weak tutorial.

BOTTOM LINE: If you don't have high expectations for a Trek RTS, then you won't be disappointed.

PC GAMER 55%
MERELY OKAY

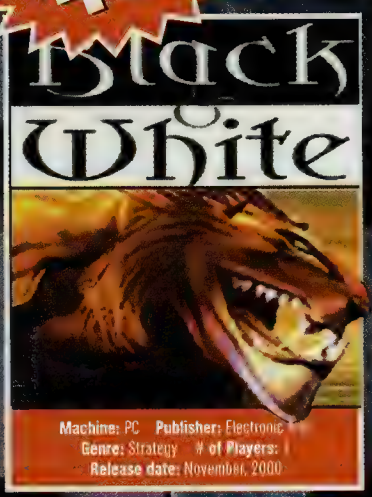
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American McGee's Alice
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Black & White

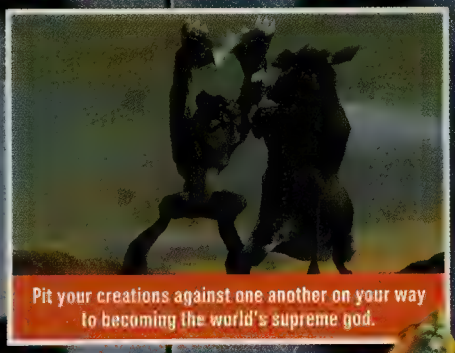
$44.99

No Gray Areas, Baby.

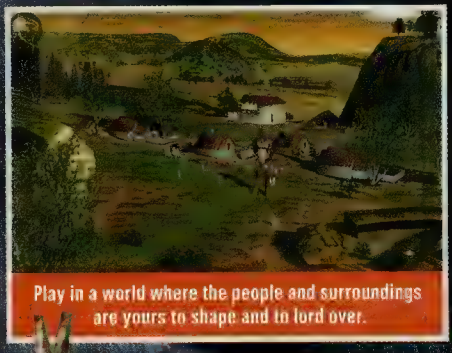


Machine: PC Publisher: Electronic
Genre: Strategy # of Players: 1
Release date: November, 2000

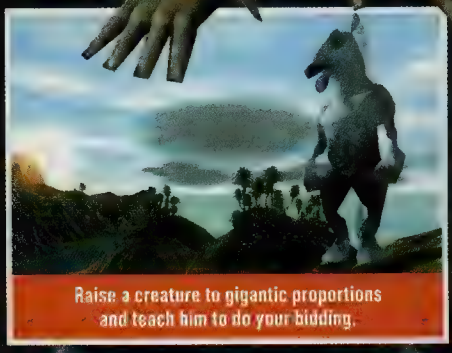
"From game designer Peter Molyneux comes **Black & White**, an RPG that offers two unique experiences. The raising and nurturing of a creature – which acts as the player's physical manifestation – will determine the gameplay style of black (evil) or white (good). Whether it's a kind, moral creature or an evil, destructive beast all depends on the you, the player." – **DailyRadar.com**



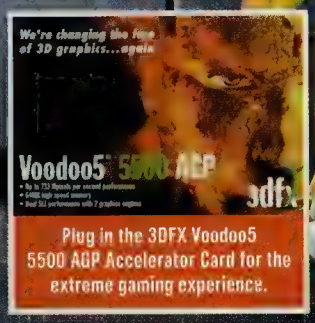
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Wonderland Goes Psychotic



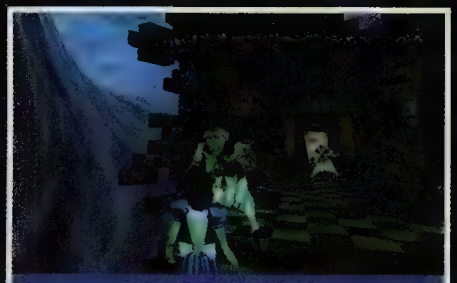
American McGee's Alice

$44.99

"Although it's not always a formula for success, **American McGee's Alice** takes it's name from former id Software level designer American McGee. The game, loosely based on Alice in Wonderland, is a Dali-esque surreal twist on the classic tale. Using the Quake 3: Arena engine, this action title will pit the player as Alice (with the Cheshire Cat as Alice's confidant and guide) through 15 levels of hellish representation of Wonderland. Scheduled for release this fall, it's defiantly a title to watch!" — **DailyRadar.com**



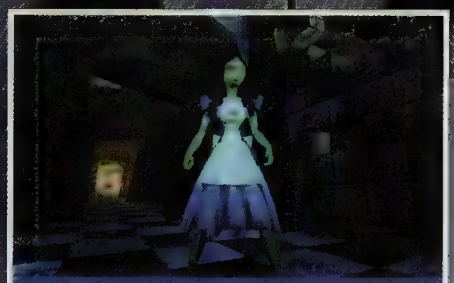
Machine: PC **Publisher:** Electronic Arts
Genre: Action/Adventure **# of Players:** 1
Release date: Fall, 2000



More than 15 challenging levels and over 30 active characters.



Specialized particle system for fire, smoke, fog, explosions, rain and snow.



Beautifully rendered 3-D environments, including the intimidating and deadly Fortress of Doors.



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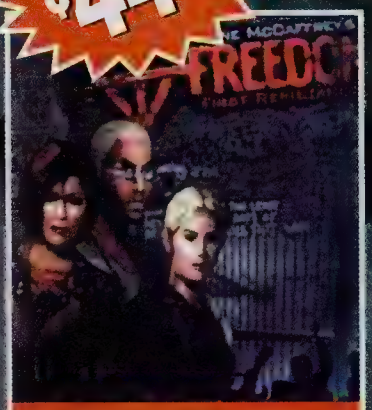
Check out Microsoft's revolutionary optical IntelliMouse.

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ANNE McCAFFREY'S FREEDOM
FIRST RESISTANCE

$44.99



Machine: PC Publisher: Red Storm
Genre: Action # of Players: 1
Release date: November, 2000

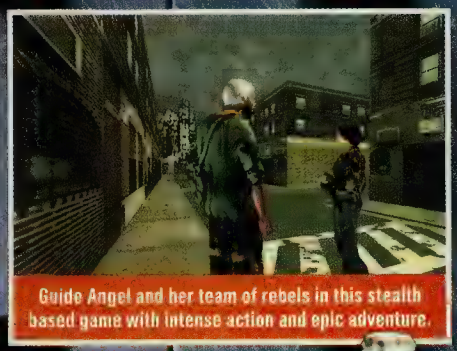
Your Rights Are Being Threatened And You Are Pissed.



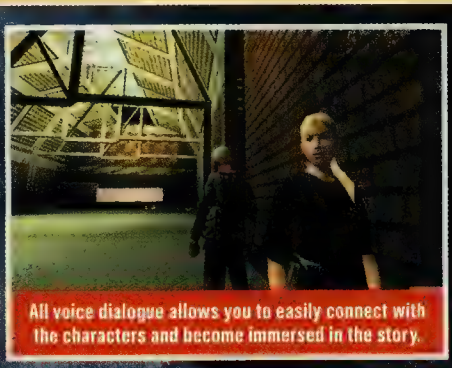
"For fans of the Freedom series, this game will be a sort of fourth addition to the trilogy and will be a natural extension of the characters and events. The game takes place in a world where some rather unneighborly aliens show up, beat the crap out of us, move in with their tacky posters and crappy taste in music and start leaving their underwear around like they own the whole darn earth. Needless to say, a plucky band of spunky freedom fighters decide to take out the garbage – earthling style. Angel Sanchez, who reminds us of the hot-'n'-scary Linda Hamilton from T2, gets recruited by the resistance movement, gathers her team and decides to take the aliens to a little hoe-down at knuckle junction."

Daily RADAR .com

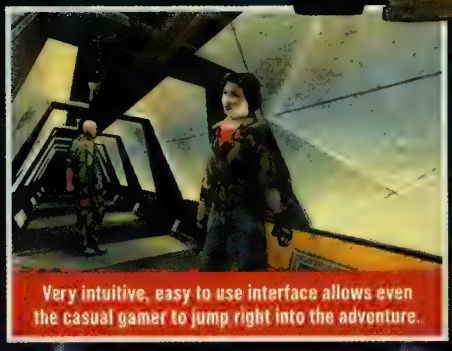
– DailyRadar.com



Guide Angel and her team of rebels in this stealth based game with intense action and epic adventure.



All voice dialogue allows you to easily connect with the characters and become immersed in the story.



Very intuitive, easy to use interface allows even the casual gamer to jump right into the adventure.



Meld gamepad and keyboard/mouse functions with Microsoft's Dual Strike Controller.



First In Line or On-Line

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SAVE 20% on Prima's Official Strategy Guide when you buy the game.

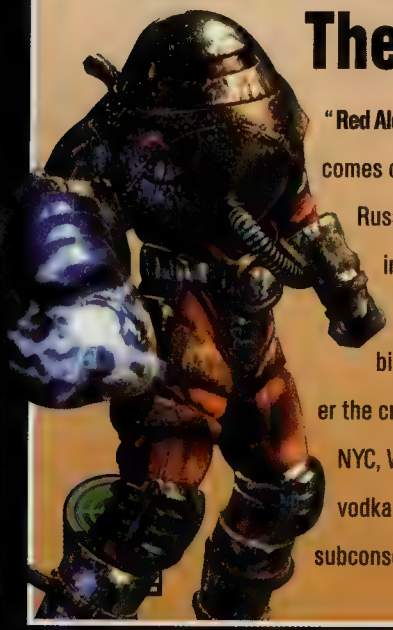
gamestop!com FuncoLand

Gamestop Babbage's software etc

Here Come The Reds To Give You The Blues.

COMMAND & CONQUER RED ALERT 2

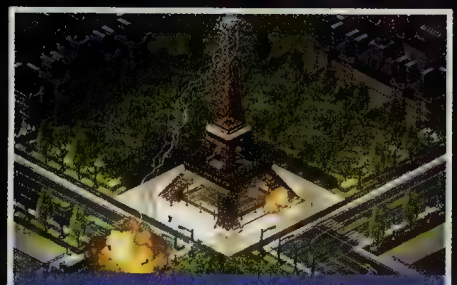
COMING SOON!



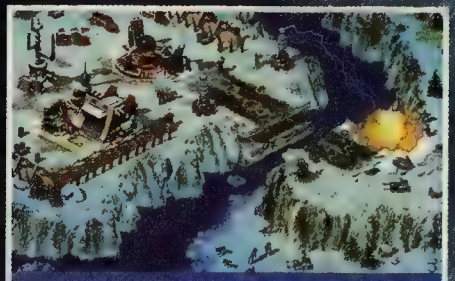
"**Red Alert 2**'s opening movie comes complete with our spacious skies filled with paratrooping Russians, lumbering Soviet airships and Evil Empire missiles pluming Commie contrails. The post-alternate-history-WWII defeat of the Soviet Empire has boomeranged on Fortress America in a big way: After decades of rebuilding the Reds are back to deliver the crushing blow. This time the battlefields are locales such as NYC, Washington, D.C., Texas and Ohio. So hang tight, stock up on vodka and hang around upbeat cheery people who'll assuage those subconscious fears of a Soviet invasion." — **DailyRadar.com**



Genre: Strategy
Release date: Fall, 2000



The Soviets roll on the Eiffel Tower.



Red Alert 2 boasts new features specifically designed to speed the pace of gameplay.

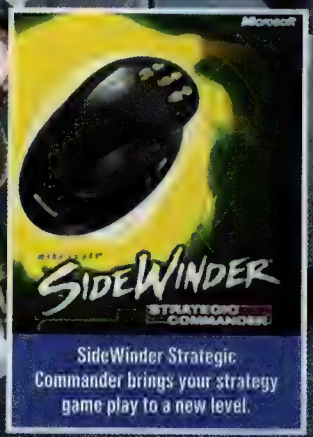


An offshore flotilla attempts to reduce a US base to rubble.



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SideWinder Strategic Commander brings your strategy game play to a new level.

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Ace pilots don't settle for cheap thrills.
Real flying is all about wrestling the raw powers of Mother Nature. Hanging on as you throttle your engines. And relishing the feeling as your wheels kiss the tarmac. You've never felt anything like the new SideWinder® Force Feedback 2 joystick. Using a next-generation processor, it takes technology to the limit by delivering over 100 distinct forces with more speed and strength than ever before. Turning more than 200 force feedback–enabled games into the most intense gaming experience imaginable. So the next time you're ready to push the envelope, you'd better buckle in first.
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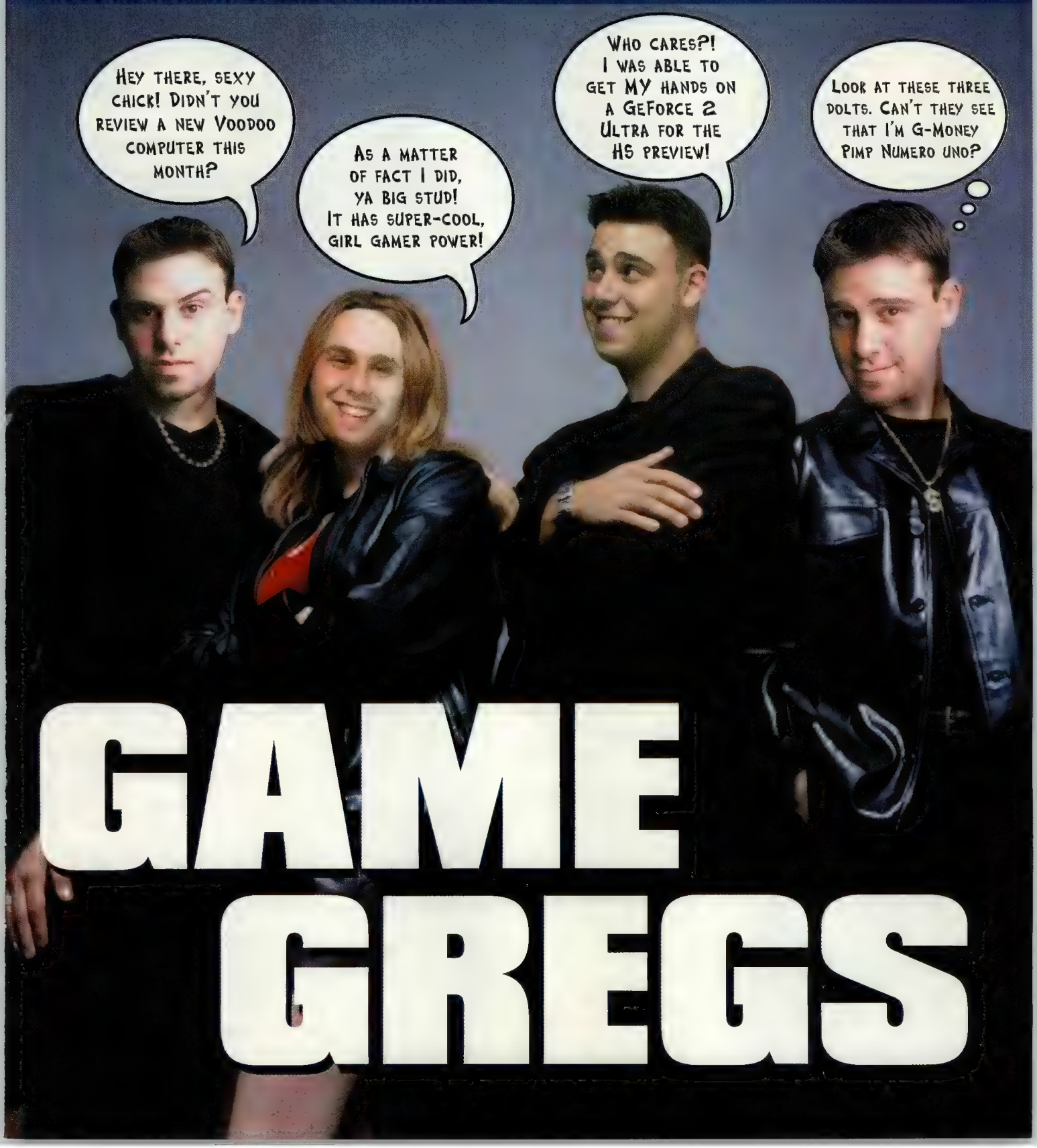
New AMD Thunderbird system reviewed!

Microsoft thinks it has the definitive answer to Mindmaker's Game Commander. We tell it like it is.

HardStuff

NOVEMBER 2000

THE ULTIMATE MONTHLY GUIDE TO GAMING GEAR



GAME GREGS

HSCONTENTS



Coughers Of The World, Unite!

It's hard to believe, but the Holiday season is nearly upon us once again...Wait, what am I talking about? It might be November for you, but it's only the end of August for me — there ain't no big holiday coming up other than Labor Day, and I refuse to play a role in your suspension of disbelief any longer! The world is a harsh, cold place where a noxious mix of fear and apathy rules the day — a place where the land of "make-believe" no longer makes any sense. That's right, folks, you guessed it; I've just quit smoking.

Listen to me right now like you've never listened to me before: never ever, ever, start smoking! It's the worst thing in the world you can do to yourself, and quitting before it's too late is often very difficult — hell, quitting after you've already had a heart attack or lost a lung is often difficult! Make it easy on yourself and don't start in the first place. If you already smoke, don't finish that last pack — you'll never quit by thinking that way. Just toss your remaining butts in the garbage and stop smoking right now. Every day sooner that you quit increases your chances of living a full and healthy life.

Of course, none of this has anything to do with PC hardware, but does my little column here ever? Don't worry, I have a bunch of great peripherals in this month's issue that I think you'll really enjoy reading about. Just look over at the table of contents and see what piques your interest!

Greg Vederman, Senior Associate Editor

HSPREVIEWS

NVIDIA GEFORCE 2 GTS ULTRA PAGE 170
The world's fastest is about to get faster — again. NVIDIA gets set to launch a new 3D card. We've got the full scoop.

HSREVIEWS

VOODOO COMPUTER SYSTEM PAGE 175
Not to be confused with 3dfx, Voodoo is a Canadian PC builder!

AOPEN GEFORCE 2 GTS PAGE 178
An overclocker's dream come true?

MICROSOFT GAME VOICE PAGE 178
Last month, we reviewed Voice Commander — this month, Microsoft answers back.

LOGITECH WINGMAN RUMBLEPAD PAGE 179
Logitech keeps the cool gadgets rolling in with this hot new gamepad!



HSTECHQ&A

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS GRAVY TRADER, AND WHY WON'T THE FIRE ALARM IN MY COMPUTER TURN OFF? PAGE 182



HARD STUFF PHOTOS BY MARK MAGEO • HARD STUFF COVER PHOTO BY KAREN MOSKOWITZ

How We Rate the Hard Stuff

You've been around long enough to know the greatest technology doesn't mean a thing unless it improves the games you love to play. Our reviews focus on real-world testing, but when a number is in order for comparisons, we use the benchmarking tools developed by our hardware-frenzied sister publication *Maximum PC*. Between our testing and the BenchMarks, you'll get the straight story.

HSTRINITY

Welcome to a BRAVE NEW WORLD

So you want to build a new PC, huh? As you may know, it can be a tricky affair. Luckily, Hard Stuff editor Greg Vederman is here to help you select the best parts for the job. The prices listed below reflect the lowest prices we could find as we went to press (obtained almost entirely from *www.pricewatch.com*).

ENTRY-LEVEL SYSTEM
PRICE: ROUGHLY $999

CASE: 300 watt ATX form factor	$100
PROCESSOR: Intel Celeron 600MHz FCGA	$95
MOTHERBOARD: Gigabyte GA-6VX7-4X	$83
MEMORY: 128MB PC-133 SDRAM	$111
CD-ROM/DVD-ROM: Hi-Val 6X Pioneer DVD-ROM drive w/software DVD decoding	$115
FLOPPY DRIVE: Samsung 3.5" 1.44MB	$8
HARD DRIVE: IBM Deskstar 75GXP 15.2GB 7200RPM	$97
SOUND CARD: Creative Labs SBLive! Value	$36
MODEM: 3COM #5685 56K v. 90	$85
MONITOR: 17" Optiquest Q71	$170
VIDEO CARD: 3dfx Voodoo3 3000	$83
JOYSTICK: Logitech WingMan Digital	$17
GAMEPAD: Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad	$23
SPEAKERS: Labtech LCS-2414	$35
KEYBOARD: Addtronics	$15
USB MOUSE: Logitech or Microsoft	$39
TOTAL	$1,012

MID-RANGE SYSTEM
PRICE: ROUGHLY $1,800

CASE: 300 watt ATX form factor	$100
PROCESSOR: AMD Athlon 700MHz	$142
MOTHERBOARD: Asus K7V	$112
MEMORY: 128MB PC-133 SDRAM	$111
CD-ROM/DVD-ROM: Creative Labs Encore 8X with Dxr3	$189
FLOPPY DRIVE: Samsung 3.5" 1.44MB	$8
HARD DRIVE: Maxtor 52049H4(OEM) 20.4GB 7200RPM ($120)	$117
SOUND CARD: Creative Labs SBLive! MP3+	$69
MODEM: 3COM #5685 56K v. 90	$85
MONITOR: 19" Optiquest Q95	$299
VIDEO CARD: 32MB GeForce 256	$117
JOYSTICK: Microsoft Sidewinder Precision Pro	$53
GAMEPAD: Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad	$23
SPEAKERS: Cambridge SoundWorks FPS 1000	$70
KEYBOARD: Addtronics	$15
USB MOUSE: Logitech or Microsoft	$39
TOTALS	$1,552

HIGH-END SYSTEM
PRICE: $3,000 AND ABOVE

CASE: 300 watt ATX form factor	$100
PROCESSOR: AMD Thunderbird 1.1GHz	$715
MOTHERBOARD: Asus A7V	$88
MEMORY: 256MB PC-133 SDRAM	$206
CD-ROM/DVD-ROM: Pioneer HDVD10AS-00R1 10X DVD-ROM with MPG2 card.	$259
FLOPPY DRIVE: Samsung 3.5" 1.44MB	$8
HARD DRIVE: IBM Deskstar 75GXB ATA/66 7200RPM	$528
SOUND CARD: Creative Labs SBLive! MP3+	$69
MODEM: 3COM #5685 56K v.90	$85
MONITOR: 19" Optiquest Q95	$299
VIDEO CARD: NVIDIA GeForce 2 GTS	$240
JOYSTICK: Saitek X36 Flight Control System (USB)	$96
GAMEPAD: Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad	$23
SPEAKERS: Klipsch ProMedia v.2-400	$249
KEYBOARD: Microsoft Natural Keyboard Pro	$75
USB MOUSE: Original IntelliMouse with IntelliEye technology	$55
TOTALS	$3,095

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OVERCLOCKING USED TO BE A BUMMER



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If you really must live on the edge, do it safely. The AOpen Afterburner Graphic Accelerator's unique Open BIOS lets you overclock to achieve radical performance without bombing-out your system! It's simple, safe and provides a level of control that no other graphic accelerator can offer. You might just say it releases the true heart and soul of the VGA card's capabilities. A passionate experience, to be sure. And naturally, the AOpen Afterburner features the nVIDIA GeForce Series chipset to let you maximize your total gaming experience. It also features a cool VGA-to-TV output and is compatible with most current mainboards on the market today.

So don't flirt with danger any longer. Stop by your nearest Micro Center store or visit microcenter.com for store locations and get your Afterburner video performance solution now! With Afterburner you may continue to live on the edge, but at least your mother would approve.

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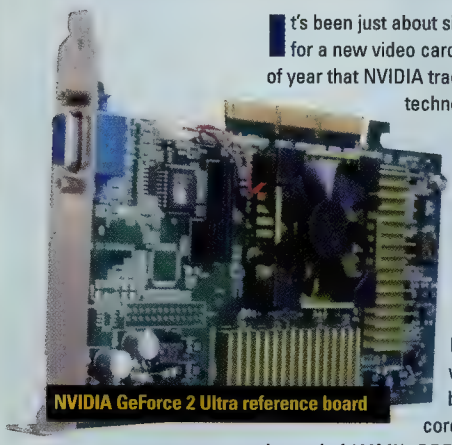
MICRO CENTER THE COMPUTER DEPARTMENT STORE microcenter.com

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #965

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NVIDIA unleashes the new GeForce 2 Ultra

And we've put one through its paces for your gaming pleasure



NVIDIA GeForce 2 Ultra reference board

It's been just about six months, folks, so get ready for a new video card from NVIDIA! This is the time of year that NVIDIA traditionally shrinks whatever technology it has, speeds it up a bit, and pushes it out the door! And just like the jump from TNT2 to TNT2 Ultra, that's exactly what they've done this time around. While the core of the GeForce 2 Ultra hasn't been shrunk from its .18 microns, the process has apparently gotten better in the past six months, which is the reason for the boost from GeForce 2's 200MHz core to Ultra's 250MHz. In addition, instead of 166MHz DDR (effectively 333MHz), the 64MB of DDR memory that will ship on all Ultras has been beefed up to 233MHz (effectively 466MHz)! How do these speed increases affect the speed of your games? Check out the chart below.



Creative Labs Annihilator 2 Ultra (beta)

Note: Creative Labs was nice enough to send us an early version of its 3D Blaster Annihilator 2 Ultra for this preview. While quite far along, it does not represent final hardware or software, so please don't rely on these numbers as any indication of how the shipping product may perform. Look for our full review of a final Annihilator 2 Ultra in next month's issue.

NVIDIA INTERVIEW

We fired off a few questions to NVIDIA's Derek Perez to get a bit more info on the Ultra and to see what NVIDIA thinks of its closest competitor as of last month: ATI's RADEON. So, without further ado, here's the man himself...

PC GAMER: Why now? NVIDIA always seems to stick to a six-month release cycle, but the Ultra seems to have been pushed out a bit quicker than usual. Any particular reason for this?

DEREK PEREZ: No, we've always delivered a new product for the enthusiast/mainstream PC market every six months — our last release, the GeForce 2 GTS was in April, and by the time Ultra ships, it will be about six months between products.

PCG: Your six-month release cycle seems very closely tied to when your OEM partners (Dell, for example) release new computer models. Obviously, when a company like Dell is getting set to launch a new high-end system, it's going to want to use the newest, fastest graphics card around. That's terrific for a company like NVIDIA, which always has a new flagship product ready to go, but do you think this mind-numbingly quick turn around cycle could end up frustrating your add-in customers in the process?

DP: This is true — that is why we stick to that six-month product cycle. As for the add-in-card market, there are always people looking to upgrade their graphics cards close to every six months. Our add-in-card guys love to go to retail and have a new product for both the spring (grads and dads season) and the fall (back to school, Christmas season).

PCG: The ATI Radeon has just launched and is a lot faster than many people were expecting — even managing to beat out the GeForce 2 GTS (non Ultra) at high resolutions. Did this catch you by surprise? What do you think of ATI's technology?

DP: No, we're never surprised by what ATI can do; they have great engineers with the ability to deliver great graphics technology. I have not seen the Radeon yet, so I'd like to reserve judgment until I do.

PCG: Thanks for your time, Derek.

DP: No problem!

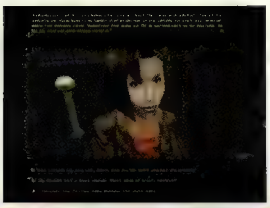
Who cares about features? Let's see those numbers!

All tests run on 1GHz Athlon system

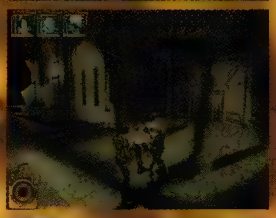
	3D MARK 2000								QUAKE III					MDK2			
	800 x 600				1,024 x 768												
	3D MARK	GAME 1 (in frames per second)	GAME 2 (in frames per second)	FILL RATE	3D MARK	GAME 1 (in frames per second)	GAME 2 (in frames per second)	FILL RATE	640 x 480	800 x 600	1,024 x 768	1,280 x 1,024	1,600 x 1,200	800 x 600	1,024 x 768	1,280 x 1,024	1,600 x 1,200
Geforce2 Ultra 64MB with beta Detonator 3 drivers	7,086	LOW DETAIL 141.2 MID DETAIL 106.7 HIGH DETAIL 61.8	LOW DETAIL 158.5 MID DETAIL 76.8 HIGH DETAIL 45.6	760.6	5,975	LOW DETAIL 130.2 MID DETAIL 92.7 HIGH DETAIL 45.0	LOW DETAIL 113.4 MID DETAIL 72.5 HIGH DETAIL 44.1	756.5	112.2	110.5	100.3	73.8	50.2	125.0	118.5	84.4	56.7
GeForce2 GTS 64MB	6,013	LOW DETAIL 127.4 MID DETAIL 92.5 HIGH DETAIL 43.9	LOW DETAIL 120.4 MID DETAIL 73.6 HIGH DETAIL 44.1	596.4	4,303	LOW DETAIL 85.6 MID DETAIL 62.1 HIGH DETAIL 29.9	LOW DETAIL 78.3 MID DETAIL 61.6 HIGH DETAIL 41.1	528.4	110.5	97.5	68.1	29.1	N/A	115.7	78.09	N/A	32.78
ATI Radeon 64MB	6,086	LOW DETAIL 136.1 MID DETAIL 94.5 HIGH DETAIL 42.3	LOW DETAIL 124.6 MID DETAIL 68.2 HIGH DETAIL 41.4	579.8	4,769	LOW DETAIL 101.7 MID DETAIL 70.2 HIGH DETAIL 31.2	LOW DETAIL 91.9 MID DETAIL 68.2 HIGH DETAIL 39.0	579.8	104.2	95.9	75.3	49.8	35.4	93.0	81.7	54.2	37.6

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An Avenging Angel











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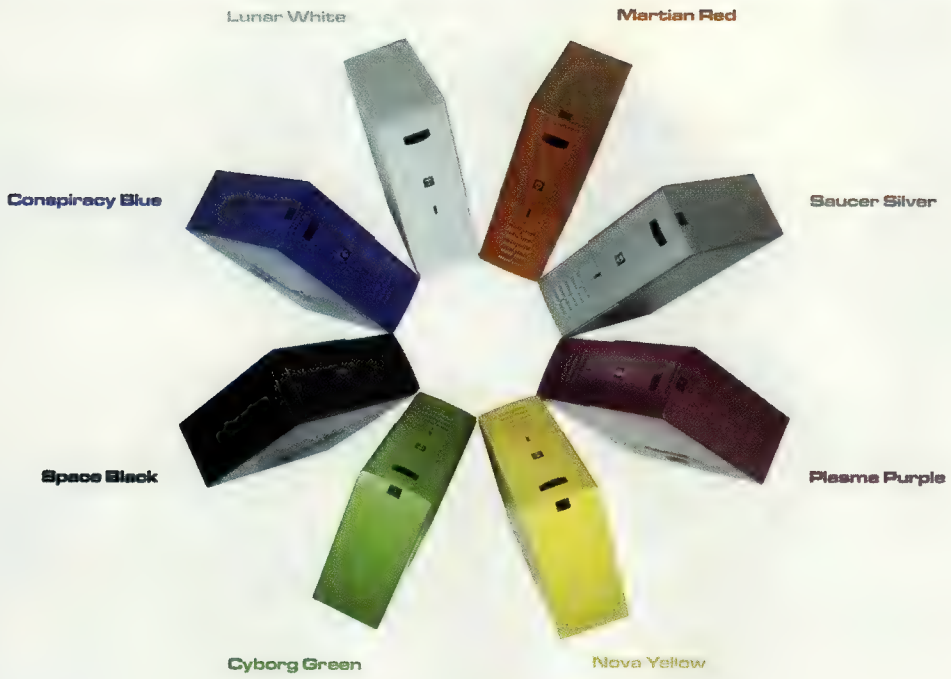
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AMD Athlon Thunderbird 1GHz Processor
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Floppy Drive 1.44MB
20GB 7200RPM Hard Drive (UltraATA-100)
"NEW" Nvidia GeForce2 Ultra 32MB Video Card
SoundBlaster LIVE! 3D Sound Card
Altec Lansing ACS54 Gaming
5-Piece Subwoofer/Speaker System
Pioneer 16x/40x DVD Player
Hydraulic Black ATX Mid-Tower w/300-Watt PS
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Black 107-Enhanced Keyboard PS/2
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"Excellent voice recognition"
- CNET Gamecenter

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- PC World

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"Amazing to use"
- Computer Gaming World

"Revolutionary"
- CombatSim.com

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New Version 2

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A division of Mindmaker, Inc.
(408) 467-0457 gcsales@gamecommander.com

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VOODOO

MonsoonXS

And Then From The North, A New Gunslinger Rode Into Town...

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

COMPANY
Voodoo Computers
(888) 70-VOODOO
www.voodoo.ca

PRICE
$3,565
($5,244 Canadian)

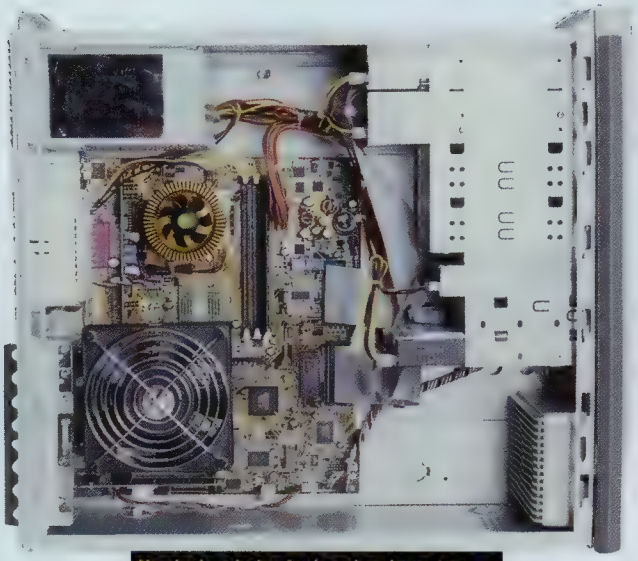
It should be stated right from the start of this review that Voodoo Computers and 3dfx have no connection to one another — so don't go running off to tell your friend that 3dfx has started building gaming PCs because you'll end up looking foolish and stupid...again.

If we read comic books here at *PC Gamer*, we'd be able to come up with a really cool comic book analogy for how Voodoo Computers is sort of like a super group of mutants from up in Canada, while companies like Falcon and Alienware are their North American mutant super foes. Voodoo has been in business since 1991, and the MonsoonXS is the first of their systems we've ever looked at, and after putting it through our rigorous testing process, we're hoping it isn't our last.

Just like you'd expect to see in a high-end gaming PC, the parts found in the MonsoonXS are absolutely top-of-the-line — up to and including the new Maxtor 40.9GB ATA-100 hard drive (you read that right, ATA-100, not 33 or 64MB 66), its Hercules 3D Prophet II (GeForce 2), and the 1GHz AMD Thunderbird CPU it uses for a brain.



This is a voodoo doll. Like 3dfx, it has nothing to do with Voodoo computers! Got that, people?



Voodoo's solution for keeping the system cool is its well-placed fans.

Additionally, all the wires and cables associated with a fully loaded system of this sort are tucked away very well, and the inside of the case looks amazingly neat and organized as a result.

Keeping all this hot new hardware cool isn't a walk in the park. We always find it interesting to see how a new kid on the block (no, not the band — though tech-boy Vederman used to get picked on in high school for looking like one band member) is going to deal with cooling issues, and we think Voodoo has an elegant solution. It starts with a 80mm fan at the front of the case that sucks cool air in from the outside toward the AGP and PCI slots. This is important because the enormous 120mm fan that sits immediately in front of these slots needs all the cool air it can get to blow over the cards that reside here. What about CPU cooling, you ask? The Thunderbird itself uses a Golden Orb cooling unit that is a two-in-one heat sink and fan combo (a new Chrome Orb unit is now being put to use, and it reportedly does an even better job). As if that weren't enough, a fan at the back of the case blows cool air directly on the Golden Orb, and then all of the combined



The MonsoonXS comes from our friendly neighbors up north, and we thank you!

SYSTEM SPECS

SYSTEM
Processor: 1GHz AMD Athlon "Thunderbird"
Motherboard: Asus A7V
Memory: 256MB PC-133 SDRAM RAM

STORAGE
Hard Drive: 40.9GB Maxtor Diamondmax, 7200 RPM ATA100
DVD-ROM: Toshiba 16X (40X CD-ROM)
CD-RW: Plextor Plexwriter 12/10/32

EXPANSION
5.25" bays: 4
3.5" bays: 5
Bus Slots: 1 AGP, 5 PCI
RAM: 3 DIMM sockets

VIDEO
Primary Display Adapter: 64MB Hercules 3D Prophet II (GeForce 2 GTS)
Monitor: 17" Samsung Syncmaster 755DF

AUDIO
Sound Card: Creative Labs Sound Blaster Live! Value
Speakers: Cambridge Soundworks Digital Desktop Theatre 5.1

OTHER
Modem: Diamond Supramax V.90 56K Voice Fax Modem
Network Card: DLink 538TX 10/100
Mouse: Logitech Wireless Mouse and Keyboard
Mousing Surface: Voodoo Slimline Logo Mousepad



The audio system that comes with the MonsoonXS is top-of-the-line, though some Klipsch speakers would be better still!

heat in the system is sucked up through the wide-open vents on the bottom of the power supply and blown right out of the back of the case.

We have a love-hate relationship with this case. On the one hand, its very roomy inside (which helps to dissipate heat), is easy on the eyes, and is probably one of the easiest computer towers to open in the known universe. To get inside, all you have to do is remove one small screw (no screwdriver required), slide the top off, and then each of the two side panels pull up and off — it's as easy as that. The problem comes when you want to take the plastic face plate off the front of the case — as we did because one of the plastic drive bay covers was crooked, and we needed to realign it. This plate is attached via many plastic hooks that need be pushed in to be released. Unfortunately, several of these plastic hooks are nearly impossible to get at. After about ten hugely frustrating minutes, we eventually got the faceplate off, along with the faces of the DVD and CD-RW drives (Sorry about that, Voodoo. Please send us a bill). Now, we have to admit, because certain members of the team had just quit smoking a few days earlier *(Aww, why you gotta do me like that? — Vederman)*, we probably weren't as patient as we should have been. If you take your time, the faceplate can be removed without using language unfit for a national publication (or the ears of some of our younger staffers).

While Voodoo offers all sorts of modifications to its systems, such as different cases, cases with fans drilled into the top of the case to keep an overclocked CPU cooler, specially-tested overclocked video cards, etc., our MonsoonXS was the vanilla variety. Now, last month we reviewed a new Falcon system that also included a 1GHz Thunderbird and a 64MB MB Hercules GeForce 2. The big difference between these two systems is that Falcon shipped its computer to us with an overclocked video card — which is great, especially since all Falcon systems are individually tested to ensure stability, but it also makes a difference in benchmark numbers (duh!), so don't think the MonsoonXS was any sort of a slouch in a benchmark score comparison. In fact, when we overclocked the video card in the Monsoon ourselves, it benchmarked as fast or faster than the Mach V in just about every test. And even without overclocking, this system runs like a bat outta hell! As fast as it is out of the box, if overclocking appeals to you, make sure you tell this to Voodoo Computers when you're ordering your system so that they can custom tailor a system to your needs.

Like any premium gaming computer, the MonsoonXS is going to put a dent in your wallet — roughly the same dent as Hypersonic, Alienware, or Falcon would. For that cost, you're getting an absolutely top-of-the-line computer with a restore CD, clear instructions, fantastic parts, and you're getting it all from a company, that while probably new to you, has been around for an awfully long time. We're impressed!

BENCHMARKS

3DMARK 99 MAX

(All tests run in 16-bit color with 16-bit Z and triple buffer)

• 800x600
3DMarks: 9,218
CPU 3DMarks: 15,942
Game 1 Race: 107.5fps
Game 2 First Person: 80.7fps
• 1600x1200
3DMarks: 7,363
CPU 3DMarks: 15,962
Game 1 Race: 69.2fps
Game 2 First Person: 78.6fps

3DMARK 2000

(All tests run at 1024x768 in 32-bit color with 24-bit Z and triple buffer)

3DMarks: 4,434
• Game 1 Helicopter
Low Detail: 86.7fps
Med Detail: 63.1fps
High Detail: 30.9fps
• Game 2 Adventure
Low Detail: 81.5fps
Med Detail: 65.9fps
High Detail: 41.4fps
• Fill Rate w/multitexturing: 529.4 million texels per second

QUAKE III

(All tests run in 32-bit color with all graphic effects set to max)

640x480: 118.5fps
800x600: 101.8fps
1024x768: 69.1fps
1280x1024: 43.0fps
1600x1200: 30.4fps

MDK2

800x600: 122.4fps
1024x768: 84.5fps
1280x1024: 52.9fps
1600x1200: 37.9fps

NORTON SI: 546.3

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS Great performer, top-notch hardware; includes restore CD; well-organized innards.

LOWS In rare instances, taking the case apart can be frustrating to people trying to quit smoking.

BOTTOM LINE Don't let the fact that Voodoo is based out of Canada stop you! These guys really know how to build a gaming PC, and the MonsoonXS is the proof.

www.DailyRadar.com

I don't know really how to say this, but I had a few doubts about the buzz on your new RADEON™ gamer boards. I checked out your so-called RADEON™ GPU with its integrated T&L acceleration and ultra-fast DDR to speed up my Quake™ III Arena framerates. Not only does RADEON™ have awesome high-quality performance but it supports more advanced 3D games and upcoming DirectX™ 8.0 features than any other graphics board. The DVD playback feature will come in handy when I need to take a break from gaming. And, I have to admit the video capture and TV-output option on RADEON™ 64MB DDR makes it a must-have. But, just remember, the only opinion of RADEON™ that matters is mine and I have only one thing to say to you ATI

NOW SHIPPING!

ATi RADEON GRAPHICS™





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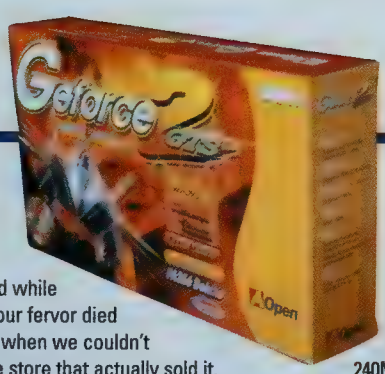
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Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #013

AOPEN

PA256 Deluxe



PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

COMPANY
AOpen
(888) 85-AOPEN
www.aopen.com

PRICE
$299

AOpen's PA256 Deluxe is a damn fine 32MB GeForce 2 card — but one that you'll probably never be able to find in a store. At $299, it's a great deal, too — especially since, unlike Creative Labs' GeForce 2 card that sells for the same price, this one has a TV-out. More than that, though, of all existing GeForce 2 cards, this one is the best suited to overclocking.

We were really excited about this card while testing it, but our fervor died down a notch when we couldn't locate a single store that actually sold it. Even *www.pricewatch.com* had no mention of the PA256. Why then, did AOpen (a company best known for its motherboards) send us this video card for review? Well, there's a chance that the PA256 is actually called "Afterburner" here in the U.S. If that's the case, then you will be able to find the card, and you should be quite happy with it. AOpen's web site mentions both cards, and their specs seem identical. We tried to get a hold of someone at AOpen to confirm our suspicions, but no one ever got back to us on the matter. Our best guess is that they are one and the same.

As we stated earlier, it's this card's overclockability that makes it a real stand out. AOpen allows you to go into the card's BIOS at startup and tweak not just core and memory speeds, but voltages as well. Don't be afraid — it won't let you fry your card; rather, it lets you play with settings within specified "safe" ranges. With some tweaking, we were able to get this card to run reliably at 240MHz/415MHz (core and RAM speeds respectively — up from 200MHz/333MHz; see the overclocked benchmarks). Be aware that your mileage may vary depending on things like the temperature inside your case. Still, if overclocking is your thing and you're looking for a GeForce 2, meet your new video card, the PA256/Afterburner.

BENCHMARKS (ALL TESTS RUN ON 1GHz ATHLON SYSTEM)
Numbers in green represent overclock scores

3DMARK 2000 (D3D)
(All tests run in 32-bit color with 24-bit Z and triple buffer)
• 800x600
3DMarks: 6,242
• Game 1 Helicopter
Low Detail: 133.0fps
Med Detail: 95.2fps
High Detail: 47.6fps
• Game 2 Adventure
Low Detail: 128.6fps
Med Detail: 73.6fps
High Detail: 42.2fps
• Fill Rate with multitexturing: 566 million texels per second
• 1024x768
3DMarks: 4,591, 5,468
• Game 1 Helicopter
Low Detail: 92.5fps, 113.6fps
Med Detail: 66.1fps, 80.7fps
High Detail: 31.6fps, 38.8fps
• Game 2 Adventure
Low Detail: 87.4fps, 107.7fps
Med Detail: 65.2fps, 71.4fps
High Detail: 39.7fps, 43.6fps
• Fill Rate with multitexturing: 547.1, 690.4 million texels per second

QUAKE III (OPENGL)
(All tests run in 32-bit color with all graphic effects set to max)
640x480: 109.7fps
800x600: 101.0fps
1024x768: 75.8fps, 89.8fps
1280x1024: 42.7fps
1600x1200: 28.4fps

MDK2
(All tests run in 32-bit color with T&L enabled and graphic effects set to max)
800x600: 119.2fps
1024x768: 85.4fps, 105.0fps
1280x1024: 50.0fps
1600x1200: 29.4fps

FINAL VERDICT
HIGHS Great for overclocking; great price; TV-out function.
LOWS No one seems to sell or know anything about the PA256 Deluxe
BOTTOM LINE Assuming that the Afterburner and the PA256 are the same — and you can find either of them — you should be quite happy with its performance.

MICROSOFT

SideWinder Game Voice

COMPANY
Microsoft
www.gamevoice.com

PRICE
$49.99 (M.S.R.P.)

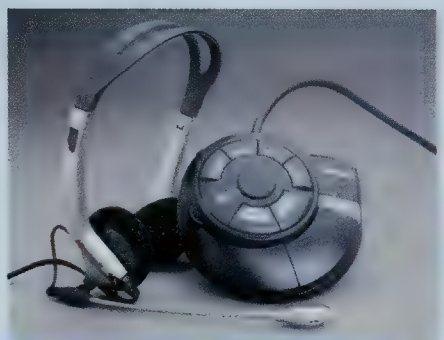
WHAT YOU'LL NEED
- Win98 or later OS
- 64MB RAM
- TCP/IP LAN or Internet connection
- Internet access with at least 33.6 kbps connection (56K or higher recommended)
- Sound card with full-duplex chip set and functional Line Out/Microphone jacks
- DirectX 8 API or later required for some games. This will be available for free download in late 2000 at *www.microsoft.com/directx*.

Hot on the heals of our Game Commander review in last month's issue, Microsoft has launched its own entry into the voice command market, the SideWinder Game Voice. And unlike Mindmaker's excellent Game Commander, Game Voice is made to do more than just allow you to give voice commands to your games. As it turns out, it's also a terrific "voice over Internet" product for chatting with your friends in a room or in multiplayer games.

Microsoft should thank its lucky stars that Game Voice is so good at this "voice over Internet" aspect, because the voice command feature (whereby you control your games by speaking words such as "fire" and "ammo" into the microphone instead of using your keyboard, gamepad, or joystick) is rather weak. Mindmaker, the company that makes Game Commander, designs voice recognition software almost exclusively. As a result, its product parses speech much better than Microsoft's. Additionally, there's much less of a delay between when you utter your command into Game Commander and when it's executed by the game. Microsoft's Game Voice simply takes too long to apply your voice commands — making only but the least time-intensive commands worth the effort. If your main concern is voice command, grab Game Commander instead of Game Voice.

On the other hand, when it comes to multiplayer chat, it is damn near impossible to beat Game Voice. The pod it comes with allows you to pick which specific people in a game you want to talk to — be they individuals or your entire team, and even allows you to voice control your game at the same time with a simple push of the "command" button.

In most cases, you're going to want everyone you're playing with to have a Game Voice for the best experience. In a pinch, however, you can have your friends download a free, stripped-down version of the software from Microsoft's web site that will work with regular speakers and a standard PC microphone. Obviously, anyone using this free software won't have a control pod, meaning that his or her experience won't be as rich as yours, but hey, you'll still be having a blast!


If you download the free software, no pod for you!

FINAL VERDICT
HIGHS In-game chat is the best around; good voice quality even over a modem.
LOWS The voice command feature is clearly inferior to that of Mindmaker's Game Commander.
BOTTOM LINE If you want to chat with your chums while playing your favorite games, Game Commander is the better choice.

www.DailyRadar.com

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

LOGITECH

WingMan RumblePad

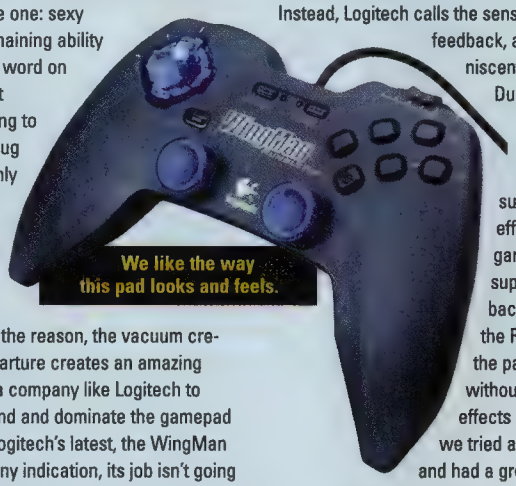
COMPANY
Logitech
(888) 863-8312
www.logitech.com

PRICE
$29.99 (M.S.R.P.)

OTHER OPTIONS

This isn't the only controller with similarities to the PlayStation Dual Shock. Interact makes a gamepad called the HammerHead FX that shares many of the same features — but requires batteries. And for some strange reason, it carries the "3dfx" brand name. Give it a look-see at *www.interact-acc.com*.

This may come as a shock to you, but the original Microsoft SideWinder Gamepad — you know the one: sexy curves; daisy-chaining ability — is gone. Yep, word on the street is that Microsoft is going to be pulling the plug on the most highly regarded PC controller of all time. Why? Perhaps they've gone mad! Whatever the reason, the vacuum created by this departure creates an amazing opportunity for a company like Logitech to come from behind and dominate the gamepad market. And if Logitech's latest, the WingMan RumblePad, is any indication, its job isn't going to be as difficult as some might think.



We like the way this pad looks and feels.

Logitech stops a hair short of calling the RumblePad a force feedback gamepad — probably because it doesn't want gamers to think that, if you're firing a gun or taking a laser blast to the face, your hand is going to shake so violently as to make controlling the game difficult. Instead, Logitech calls the sensation "vibration" feedback, and it feels reminiscent of a PlayStation Dual Shock controller — but with the ability to render more subtle force effects. Most any game that currently supports force feedback will work with the RumblePad (and the pad can be used without feedback effects in any game), so we tried a bunch of them and had a great time with each. The effects are powerful (without being *too* powerful), and the device itself is comfortable enough to use for an hour or two at a time.

Like most pads, the WingMan comes standard with an eight-way D-pad and six primary buttons on its face along with two flipper buttons on top. Additionally, the top right corner of the pad is home to a small throttle slider. But what makes the RumblePad really stand out (besides the, y'know, *rumbling*) is its two thumb-controlled analog sticks a la the PlayStation Dual Shock. (Jeez, wonder where they got the idea for this controller?) They feel great and add precise 360-degree control into the mix.

For $29.99, you really can't go wrong with this pad. It slices, it dices…it rumbles and tumbles…and to top it all off, it feels more solid than any gamepad we've ever tested.

FINAL VERDICT

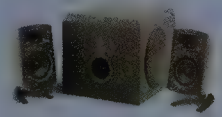
HIGHS Feels great in your hands; the vibration effects work very well (but you don't have to use the force feedback if you don't want); USB compatible; no batteries required.

LOWS Some gamers may find the pad's buttons a bit small.

BOTTOM LINE In five words: WingMan RumblePad gets it done!

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Klipsch ProMedia 2.1—$199



Klipsch ProMedia v.2-400—$249

Klipsch THX




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THANK GOD EVERYTHING'S NOT POWERED BY VOODOO5.
With the world's first full-scene hardware anti-aliasing and our proprietary T-buffer™ cinematic effects engine, the new Voodoo5™ is the most powerful 3D accelerator card on the planet. Want proof? See for yourself @ www.3dfx.com.
FULL-SCENE HARDWARE ANTI-ALIASING: INSTANTLY SHARPENS AND SMOOTHES THE GAMES YOU ALREADY OWN.
T-BUFFER CINEMATIC EFFECTS ENGINE: THE MOST REALISTIC 3D ENVIRONMENT ALLOWED BY LAW.
UP TO 1.5 GIGAPIXEL/SEC FILL RATE: TEAR THROUGH LEVELS. BURN THROUGH SCENES.
3dfx
SO POWERFUL IT'S KIND OF RIDICULOUS
Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #373

Sirens Don't Belong in a Healthy PC



Does your PC sound like a fire truck? Uh oh.

Q **I am having some trouble with my motherboard (Gigabyte GA-71XE). What does it mean when it emits a loud sound similar to that of a police car or fire truck siren? I have turned off any potential alarms I've found in the Bios, and still it starts screaming at me every now and again. The temperature seems fine — it gets hot, but not hot enough to sound the warning alarm. You have to help me! If I don't find a solution soon, I may be forced to shoot the computer and put it out of its misery! I have already installed an extra fan in my case on the off chance that it is a heat issue, and I've checked on the Gigabyte web site for a possible solution, but they don't mention anything about this "phantom" sound, and extra fan or no, the alarm keeps going off! What in the world is going on?**

— Paul C., via the Internet

A D'oh! Talk about an annoying problem. I received a computer for review not too long ago, and it also made a siren-like sound for no apparent reason. I can't remember for sure, but it's possible that it might have even had the same Gigabyte board you're having problems with. As it turns out, in this computer, it was the "highest temperature alarm" that was to blame. So, I tried lowering the maximum temperature — siren sounded. I tried disabling the alarm altogether — siren sounded. I eventually had to send the entire system back to the vendor without reviewing it because neither the manufacturer nor I could get the alarm to shut off! My guess is that this is the same problem plaguing your system. There may be some light at the end of the tunnel, though. On Gigabyte's web site, the newest BIOS update for your motherboard includes under its list of fixes: "CPU highest temperature alarm is now changed from 95C to 75C" — which is a very good indication that this is the same problem that both you and I encountered — and that Gigabyte may have fixed it. What I'd recommend is that you go back to the site (*www.giga-byte.com*), download the newest BIOS, install it, and see if your problem goes away.

Q **I have a Voodoo3 1000. I can't find anything about it: specs, updated drivers, nothing! What is this silly thing?**

— Name withheld, via the Internet

A It's a 125MHz Voodoo3, Mr. Name Withheld. It's the least expensive of the Voodoo3 boards and companies like Compaq and Gateway often use it in their "gaming" systems. You say you haven't been able to find any information on this card? Have you tried the 3dfx web site (*www.3dfx.com*)? You'll find some info there as well as drivers.

Q **I am looking to upgrade my existing video system from a Diamond Monster 3D II to something more powerful. I own a Compaq Pentium II 333MHz with 64MB RAM. I do not have AGP capability, and I need the best PCI card I can get. Can I upgrade to a Voodoo5, or is my only choice a Voodoo3? I would prefer a 32MB card but will settle for 16MB. Would it be possible to run two 16MB Voodoo3s in SLI mode to get the equivalent of a 32MB board?**

— Ferrin Pomeroy, via the Internet

A No, you can't run two Voodoo3s in SLI mode, but you don't have to worry about that! 3dfx is now making a PCI version of the Voodoo5 5500. It is, by far, the most powerful PCI video card on the market. As of press time, they can be found for as low as $250 at companies found through sites such as *pricewatch.com*.

Q **My kids just bought a copy of your September 2000 issue, and after they were done going through it, I took a look for myself. I'm writing to get your opinion on a PC purchase because all of the computer salesmen I've talked to have given me different answers to my questions.**

Basically, I am in the process of buying a computer for my home office. I need it to be capable of running the entire Microsoft Office suite as well as some AutoCAD applications. I am currently considering buying a 733MHz PIII system from Dell that seems to ship with a lot of great hardware already included with the PC.

The system itself seems adequate, right? The real problem is picking out a monitor. Because of space restrictions on my desk, I've been giving serious thought to purchasing a LCD flat panel display instead of a standard monitor. Dell told me that such a screen would satisfy my professional requirements. Okay, that's fine, but I also have three teenage children. They are going to want to use the new computer for playing games. Many people have told me that flat

NEED HELP?

If you have a hardware question or comment, or a personal problem, write to:
Greg Vederman,
Hard Stuff, PC Gamer,
150 North Hill Drive,
Brisbane, CA 94005
or E-mail:
gvederman@pcgamer.com

DEARGREG



Q **You play computer games and test hardware for a living. How does it feel to be you?**

— Alex Pedersen, via the Internet

A Have you ever seen one of those commercials where the older lady and her younger daughter are walking through a beautiful grove of trees on a warm spring day filled with falling leaves and song birds when all of a sudden the daughter starts mouthing off about feeling "not so fresh?" That's pretty much how it feels to be me, Alex. Whenever things are going well in my life, when I'm walking through that "beautiful grove of trees," it's always then, when I'm feeling happiest that some putz has to bring me down. Do you think the mom in that commercial really wanted to hear her daughter talk about her "freshness" issue? Do you think that brightened her day any? Hell no! That's plain old creepy, Alex! Not so fresh? My ass isn't very fresh at all but you don't see me telling it to the world, do you? *(I think that was an attempt at irony, folks! — Ed.)* And that's really my point; people of the world (and Canada), we've all got problems — all of us. Some of them are big deals, and some of them aren't. Share the big deal problems with those you love, but please, keep your newfound ass boil to yourself because I don't want to hear about it — and neither does your mom. Good day. *(Cigarette, Vede? — Ed.)*

www.DailyRadar.com



Need a monitor? Viewsonic makes nice LCD displays.

panels aren't up to the job of displaying fast-paced games. Is this true? Dell is recommending that I purchase their 17" flat panel display. Do you think it would do an adequate job overall?

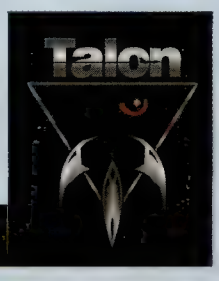
— Rolland Blais, via the Internet

A Yes, the computer itself should be more than adequate for everything you and your family want, so that's good. As for the monitor, you've heard right; for the most part, LCD displays aren't as good as standard CRTs when it comes to playing games. The problem is that they tend to blur when images flash quickly across the screen (during games) because LCDs can't completely wipe the last frame of animation away before moving on to the next. To be honest, I review very few flat panel displays for *PC Gamer*, since only the most expensive of them tend to offer adequate performance for the hardcore gamer. As for the flat panel displays that Dell offers, they look nice and performed admirably for an LCD display. Don't get me wrong, games will still be a bit blurry — especially action games — but not as bad as with many less-expensive, no-name flat panels you might find at a CompUSA or Frys.

Will it be good enough for your kids? Well, what I'd suggest you do is round up the troop and head over to a local computer store. Ask a salesperson to see what they would consider to be a relatively decent LCD screen, then play a game on it and see what everyone thinks. That's your best bet, Rolland, because the truth is that everyone's eyes are different; blurring that bothers me might not be a bother at all to you and yours.

Q I have an old computer that has been upgraded just about as mush as possible. Currently, it's an Intel Celeron 233MHz with 32MB RAM, a 12GB hard drive, Voodoo3 2000, 52x CD-ROM, 6x4x24 CD-RW, a network card, and some random old sound card. For my birthday my parents are thinking about getting me a new computer, and all I really need is something basic. I'm thinking that I should be able to purchase a new computer that has everything except the parts I already have. I want at least a Pentium III 650MHz with 128MB RAM, and if possible a new DVD-ROM drive or new 3D card. My budget is roughly $1,200. I went to Alienware's web site and tried to custom configure a computer that fit my needs, but it all seemed too expensive. What do you suggest I do? Also, could you please explain the difference between the AMD Athlon, AMD Duron, and AMD Thunderbird? They seem less expensive than Intel CPUs and if they're any good, I may try going the AMD route instead.

— Jon. C, via the Internet



The Talon PC from Falcon may be a good buy.

A The reason the cost was so high when you went to Alienware's web site was that you probably weren't configuring from their budget-line, called "Grey." These systems ship with either AMD Durons or Thunderbirds and come with just about everything you seem to need (and nothing that you don't) for around $1,300. I also checked Falcon Northwest's site (*www.falcon-nw.com*) just to see if they had anything that might be better suited for your needs, and their newest Model 2.0 Talon system could be an option. It comes with a bunch of stuff you already have — and much more — including a 700MHz Thunderbird instead of a Duron, and you can get the complete system (without a modem or monitor) for just $1,249! In this situation, going Falcon instead of Alienware could be your best bet.

As for the difference between the CPUs in the AMD product line, the Athlon is AMD's former high-end CPU and is generally a little slower than a comparably clocked PIII in most games and applications. The Duron is AMD's equivalent of Intel's Celeron. It's a budget-minded CPU with an Athlon core that's quite fast, but without as much Cache memory as the regular Athlon (which makes it a bit slower overall). The Thunderbird is AMD's new flagship processor — the fastest they currently make. They are as fast or faster than an equivalently clocked PIII. In my experience, each of these processors work very well, and are a fantastic alternative to Intel's offerings.

Q I have an old IBM laptop whose hard drive has just been formatted, and I'm trying to install a fresh copy of Windows 98. I have a boot disk that contains my CD-ROM driver but the problem is that this laptop only has one drive bay — allowing me to have the floppy drive or CD-ROM drive attached, but not both at the same time. What can I do to get Windows reinstalled?

— PJ Blandori, via the Internet

A First, start up your computer with the boot disk in the floppy drive. When you get to the DOS prompt, type: "format C: \s" (without the quotes) thus making your "C" drive bootable on its own. When that's done, restart your computer and copy the contents of your boot disk over to your "C" drive by typing "copy A:\ *.* C:\" at the DOS prompt. Once that's done, shut the computer off, unplug your floppy drive, plug in the CD-ROM drive and power up, and you should be ready to go!

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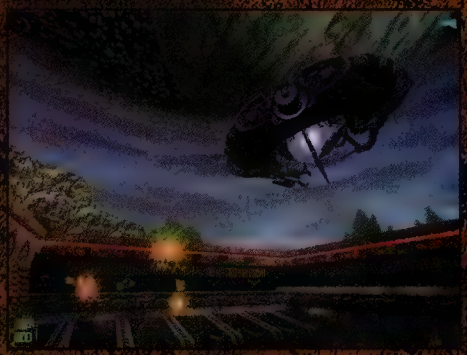
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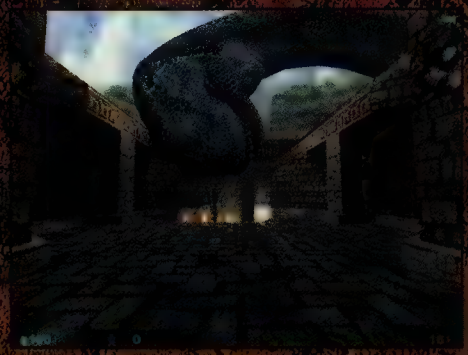
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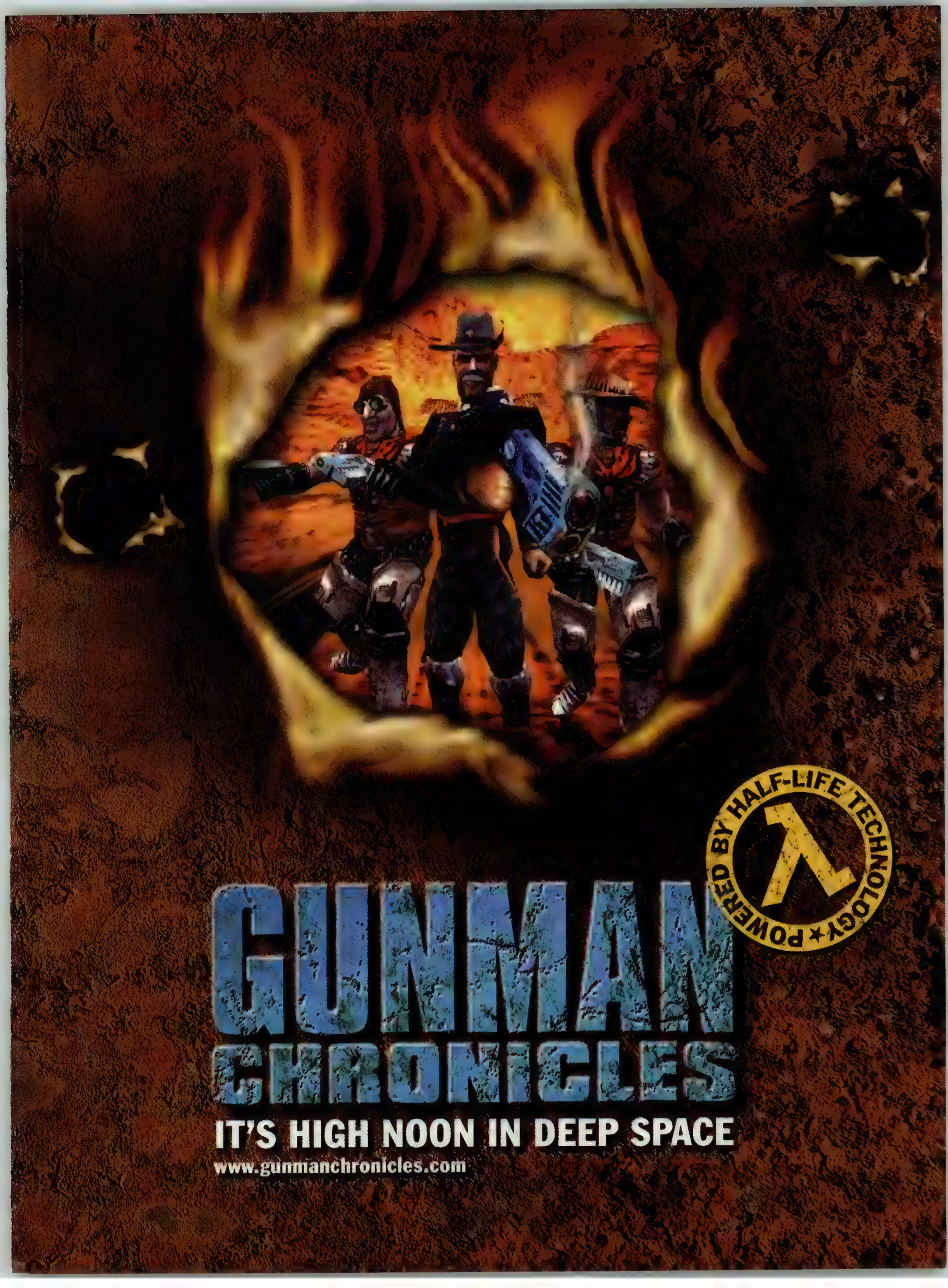
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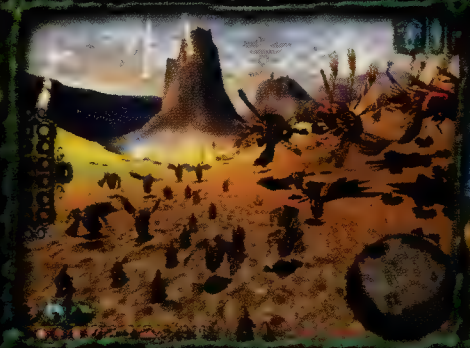
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Actual Gameplay Screens







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DAN MORRIS
extendedplay@pcgamer.com

Unreal Addictions

Unreal Tournament's gameplay has slowly evolved into a fully realized multiplayer mecca.



Chaos UT brings in some rockin' new melee weapons.

When you're a game designer who sometimes wears a gold dollar-sign medallion, you'd better have the talent to back up the swagger. Luckily for us, Cliff Bleszinksi is as good a guy as he is a designer, so we can chuckle good-naturedly at his Flavor Flav-derived fashion sense. The best-dressed man in game design keeps on impressing us with his Unreal Tournament franchise.

The *Unreal Tournament Game Of The Year Edition* is a re-issue of *UT* featuring three new mods, plus four mission packs of new levels and sundry other features. It's aimed at people who never bought the original, and as such it's full-priced. If you never played *UT*, you missed a game that I consider much more entertaining than *Quake III Arena* (though everyone else here rides on the *QIII Arena* bandwagon — albeit with a great level of respect for *UT*). And with the add-ons the new edition offers, you get a chance not only to catch up to the leading curve in FPS games, but also to experience the post-release game modes that have been steadily perfected in the wake of the initial release.

DON'T CALL IT COUNTERSTRIKE

The most impressive new mode is *Tactical Ops*, which has been run through several beta tests from its base at *www.planetunreal.com*. You could say that it borrows liberally from the *Half-Life* mod *Counter-Strike*. Or you could say that it's a total carbon copy. We wouldn't exactly argue with you on either score. But what we will say is that *Tactical Ops* brings top-notch graphics and gameplay to the model *CounterStrike* established.

You can play as a member of the good-guy Special Forces or the evil-guy Terrorists. The tactical objectives reflect real-world military situations; hostage crisis being the most obvious and personal. As with *CounterStrike*, *Tactical Ops* incorporates real weaponry and a realistic damage model; namely, if you take a bullet to a vital area and you're not sufficiently armored, it's lights out. You'll have to sit out the rest of the operation and watch the proceedings from the vantage point of an ethereal corpse.

The economic model is in place as well. For each success, you'll receive a cash award to spend on weapon upgrades and new gear. The level designers have done a great job in constructing some elaborate settings for these tac-ops; building architecture is first-rate, with lots of *Rainbow Six*-style creeping approaches and sniper nests.

The biggest edge for *Tactical Ops*, to be quite honest, is its stellar graphics. *Counter-Strike* gets a *UT*-engine facelift? Sign me up. The character models blow away anything the *Half-Life* engine is capable of, and the movement animation is superb.

Best yet, *Tactical Ops* offers 'bot support for learning the new mode, which will make it much more accessible for newbies. People trying to pick up *CounterStrike* often encounter a wave of hostile, impatient veterans on the *Half-Life* servers. By honing your skills in solo play against the very smart *UT* 'bots, you can acquit yourself against your fellow humans on the live servers.

ROCKET SCIENCE

I'll bet David Wright didn't know what kind of Pandora's Box he was opening when he released *Rocket Arena* back in the day. By reducing deathmatch to its purest expression — one on one with full weapons and ammo, in a barren level where the man with the best skill won — he set off one of the most popular (and imitated) mods in FPS history.

The *UT Game Of The Year Edition* features a *Rocket Arena* mod closely modeled after the Quake version. How closely? Well, pretty frickin' close. While two guys duke it out, the rest of the players in the Arena wait patiently in a line to challenge the winner. They get to watch the current match from any of several different perspectives, including a god's-eye view of the entire battle or through the eyes of one of the participants.



Get up close and personal for some one-on-one action in the *Rocket Arena* mod.



Assemble your boys and get it done with the team-based mod *Tactical Ops*.

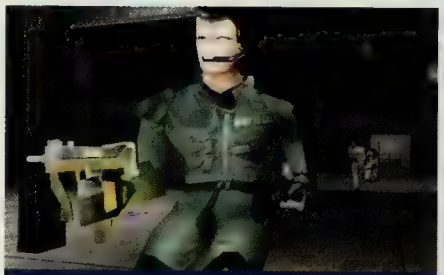
CHAOS THEORY AND MAP MEN

The third new mode included with *UT Game Of The Year Edition* is *Chaos UT*, a revved-up deathmatching mode in which new weapons and tactics make for a bloodier, faster-paced fight. You can go low-tech by using a crossbow, or high-tech, with toys like a moving auto-turret that hunts its victims by remote.

There are four new maps for use with *Chaos UT*, all of which help the mod's emphasis on immediate carnage and twitchy mass destruction. It's a mod for all those who want to get down to business while still taking advantage of the new weapons sets that *UT* modders have been throwing into the mix, and who don't have time for such complexities as teamwork or economics.

In addition to the three new game modes, three development houses have contributed map packs. Digital Extremes, Innox, and Bleszinksi's own Epic have all thrown packs into the box. They total 20 new maps, plus a variety of new skins and relic power-ups.

Maybe the most useful addition will be the improved 'bot AI. *Unreal Tournament* earned high marks for the intelligence of its computer-controlled enemies, who provide an eerily effective simulation of human opposition. Epic has made some tweaks to improve their already effective performance. The new 'bots have a better grasp on how to use power-up gear, how to swim, and when to trigger doors and elevators. They can now better adapt to team commands like "Hold Position" and "Provide Cover," and all of these AI tweaks are active within the three new mods, meaning that your *Tactical Ops* squadmates should always be on the ball.


You wouldn't mess with a guy who has BORN TO KILL stenciled on his uniform, would you?


Lord, you are my castle and my high tower. You are so near to me, O Lord...

WE CAN, BUT DO WE WANT TO?

UT developer Epic MegaGames and its publisher Infogrames are currently involved in a very interesting dilemma. With a version of *Unreal Tournament* set to debut soon on the Dreamcast, it's quite possible to arrange for Dreamcast players to go up against PC players in cross-platform competition. The question is: Do they even want to allow it?

The worry is that PC die-hards, with months of *UT* under their belts, will trounce the poor console people who are just straying into the wilds of online play for the first time. After all, what could be worse than buying a Dreamcast, venturing forth into the fabled land of online FPS play for the first time, and getting slaughtered without remorse by the hardcore PC legions?

"It would be like throwing Christians to the lions," Bleszinksi says.

For now, Infogrames is not planning on implementing the cross-platform capability. We say it's probably for the best. Who needs the console scum cluttering our *UT* servers?

PCG

BUG PATCHES

- **Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K. 2 v1.02 (fakk2_102.exe)**
 - Crash on Exit fixed in Windows.
 - Crashes on cinematics fixed.
 - Voodoo 2 support fixed.
 - The OpenGL driver can now be selected from the advanced menu.
- **Dark Reign 2 v1.1 (dr2_1_1.exe)**
 - Fixed line of sight to correct Lightning Tower not being able to attack in certain situations.
 - Fixed "unresolved transporter" crash.
 - Added more checks for cheating prevention.
 - Changed to allow low detail lights.
 - Addition of status icons for low performance.
 - Improved strategic AI.
- **Warlords Battlecry v1.01 (Battlecry_101.exe)**
 - Made the heroes cautious gathering resources.
 - Implemented a less-exploitable system which gives a more fair evaluation of XP for a battle.
 - Added the "Advanced Options" screen to the Side Selection Screen.
 - Made multiplayer more stable.
 - Added more cheat protection to catch and nullify trainers/hackers in action.
- **Unreal Tournament v428 (utpatch428.exe)**
 - Fixed patch 425's D3D problems.
 - Improved client prediction of players on slopes.
 - Fixed "killall 'bot" working on servers even if not admin.
 - Fixed Unrealed2 problems with DirectInput.
 - Fixed picked up weapons occasionally looping firing anim.
- **MDK2 v1000.1 (MDK2-Patch-1000.1.zip)**
 - Workaround for bug in Windows Millenium Edition that prevented *MDK2* from running.
 - Updated rendering code including OpenGL Display Lists.
 - Fixed a bug in level 4, in which there would be text errors on screen if Kurt used a grenade.
 - Prevented the Doctor from quick-saving during combining or using an item.
- **Diablo II v1.03 (D2Patch_103.exe)**
 - Fixed a crash when using 64MB video cards.
 - Fixed a loophole that allowed either the Necromancer wearing the complete set of Infernal Tools or the Paladin with the Milabrega set to temporarily boost skills to very high levels.
 - Fixed a bug that caused Amazons wielding a javelin in the right side inventory box and a shield in the left to do no damage with javelin-throwing skills assigned to the right mouse button.
 - The "Toggle Belt" hotkey is no longer active when the in-game chat overlay is displayed.
 - Game creation queue added. Client now informed of game creation position.
 - In 3dfx/Glide mode, colors are not as washed out and cinematics look better.
- **Icewind Dale v1.06 (IWDPatch106.exe)**
 - Fixed a potential problem with hit points becoming negative with characters having very high Constitution scores.
 - Fixed a potential crash on dial-up and serial games when viewing some transitional movies.
 - Fixed a weapon problem on Fire Elementals.

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ROB SMOLKA
pointafter@pcgamer.com

Architect Extraordinaire

Will the new course architect vault *Links 2001* back on top? Brian Silvernail, a legendary online course designer, tells us.

When I decided to write a column about the *Links 2001* course architect, my goal was to give you an early look at the program and how it was shaping up for its November release date. I had a couple of choices on how to do this: I could write about it from my viewpoint, or I could find someone *else* to talk about it and give you some *useful* information. You see, my skills allow me to go so far as to lay out the holes, maybe plop down a misshapen bunker or two, clog the landscape with some poorly designed forestry, and that's about it. I'm no artist, and that's the way it is. I'm not bitter about it...I just accept this as the truth.

If you've been playing golf games on the PC for any length of time you might know what I'm talking about if you have the same "no-talent" gene that I do. One of the first course architects was Accolade's *Mean 18*, which introduced a rudimentary way to shape your own course. Of course, at the time of its release, rudimentary was a lot more like revolutionary: we, the general public, could actually design a course that played a lot like the ones that shipped with the game! Things would never be the same for cyber-golfers again.

When Accolade followed up *Mean 18* with the first in its long-running (and now seemingly dead-on-the-vine) Jack Nicklaus series — *Jack Nicklaus' Ultimate Golf* — it improved the architect to the point where real courses could be recreated somewhat accurately. With the introduction of the *Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition* (*JNSE*), the course design program made a quantum leap, captivating a generation of Pete Dye wannabes.

> "I've talked to a couple of real-life golf course architects, and they are amazed at what these $50 golf game architects can do."
>
> **— Brian Silvernail, cyber-golf course designer**

One of the most talented of this group was a man named Brian Silvernail. From his first *JNSE* course, Rolling Evergreen (a course that has fortunately been updated by Silvernail as the architect has progressed), to the preliminary work he's doing as a beta tester for Microsoft, the results that Silvernail produces are beyond belief. Looking at some of his work makes you question whether he's using the same tools as everyone else. The developer of the two latest Jack Nicklaus games, Hypnosis, thought so much of Silvernail's work that it hired him and fellow stand-out Scott Chesney to design six courses that shipped with *Jack Nicklaus: Golden Bear Challenge*.

When I set out to find someone to talk to about the architect feature, I always used Brian Silvernail as the "like" guy. When I asked Microsoft about beta testers, I said that I was looking to speak to someone "like" Brian Silvernail...you know, a well-respected member of the cyber-golf community that had a lot of experience with the competition's products. As I was waiting for Microsoft to get back to me, I came across an awesome site called Links Designer's Corner (*www.lsgolf.com*). I quickly contacted Ian Downs, one of the guys that runs the site, to see if he had any ideas about finding someone "like" Silvernail that was in possession of the beta. Not only did he recommend a "like" guy...he gave me "the" guy! Thanks, Ian.

So, now you know a little bit about Brian Silvernail (and you can find out a lot more by visiting his web site at *www.silvernail-design.com*). He's always been one of my personal favorite designers, and I can't wait to see what he has in store for us in the future. Here's what he had to say about PC golf in general and what he thinks the impact will be of the *Links 2001* course designer:



Here's how the Jack Nicklaus series' course design has advanced over the years. The inset shows Silvernail's first version for *JNSE*...the main screen is from *Golden Bear Challenge*.

PC Gamer: Describe yourself.
Brian Silvernail: I am 30 years old, married, and my wife Leslie and I have two sons, Nicholas (3 years old) and Christopher (18 months). I work as a graphic designer at a local printer and also do electronic prepress. I grew up near Tampa, Florida.

When did you first get into gaming in general, and PC golf games in particular?
I first got into gaming when my parents bought my brother and I one of the first home versions of *Pong*. It wasn't until Accolade released *Mean 18* that I first discovered computer golf on the PC. The graphics of *Mean 18* were pretty amazing for the day, but I could never get over the cyan-colored greens from the game's EGA video display.

What do you think of these golf games?
1. Links LS
Great graphics, great game physics, but it hasn't been able to hold my interest long. I

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think the main reason for that has been the lack of a course architect...until now. Believe it or not, I enjoy designing courses for these golf games more than playing the games.

2. The Jack Nicklaus Series
It has been amazing to follow this series from the beginning. I was very honored to be asked to help out, along with Scott Chesney, with the course development for *JN5* and *JN6*. This will always make the Jack Nicklaus series special for me personally. I think *JN6* is one of the best golf games ever made, but that of course is a biased opinion.

3. Sierra's PGA Championship Golf
Vance Cook and his team have really done an excellent job with the PGA series. *PGA 2000*'s gameplay, TruSwing interface, and course architect are world-class.

What was the first course you ever developed and for what game? Did you have any idea how far you, and the golf architects in general, would come?
I developed a number of courses for *Mean 18*, but I'm not certain what the first was. I think it was called something like Pleasant Valley. If you showed me then what types of things you can do with today's golf game architects, I'm sure I wouldn't have believed it. I've talked to a couple of real-life golf course architects and they are amazed at what these $50 golf game architects can do. Their rendering capabilities are light-years beyond what they can generate with $30,000 course-design CAD applications!

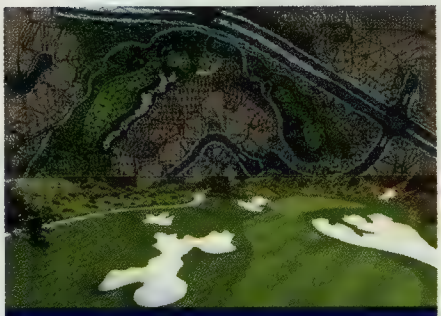

Mr. Silvernail (right) and Mr. Nicklaus confab.

With the understanding that the *Arnold Palmer Course Designer* (*APCD*) for *Links LS 2001* is still in beta format, how powerful a tool do you think this is going to be?
From what I have seen so far of the *APCD*, I think it will easily be the most powerful course creation application seen to date.

What are some of the best new features in the *APCD*?
The fact that the *APCD* is completely 3D makes for some incredible possibilities. You can basically do almost anything when forming the terrain that you can imagine. This includes arches, tunnels, and true vertical faces, many of which we've never seen in a golf sim to date. There are also small touches like the ability to include custom tee marker art and flag art.

What are some of the best improvements the *APCD* has made over its competitors?
Compared to *JN6*, the unified land plot, 3D objects, and object-foresting tool are major improvements. Of course, *PGA 2000*'s architect includes all of these features. The true 3D flexibility of the architect is the main item the *APCD* adds over *PGA 2000*.

What's missing from the *APCD* that you feel should have been included?
I haven't found too much lacking yet in the *APCD*. One thing you can't include is independent custom sky art like you can with *JN6*, but like *PGA 2000*, you can add a custom sky to your horizon art if you want. You also can't play-test a hole within the architect, but this is a very difficult feature to implement nowadays considering how complex and memory-intensive both the games and architects are.


According to Silvernail, the *Links 2001* course architect is as powerful a design tool as you'll find.

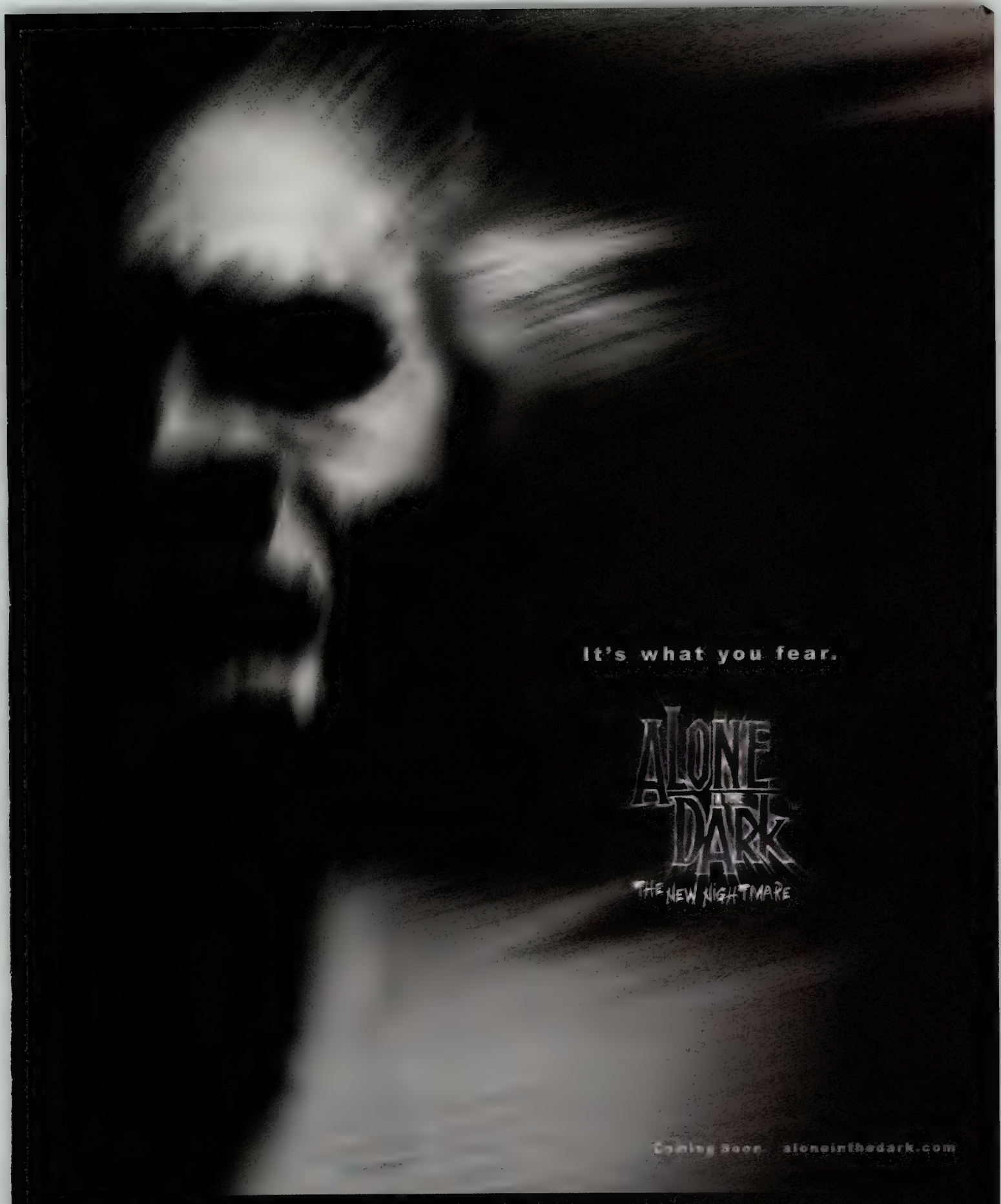
What are some of the difficulties you're having with the *APCD*?
The biggest difficulty I'm having is getting over the learning curve. It is quite different than working with *JN6* or *PGA 2000*. The terrain elevation tools are especially intimidating if you aren't familiar with working with a 3D CAD application, which I'm not. Adjusting faces, cleaning up vertices and such can be time-consuming and a bit tedious. Also, the beta copies of the *APCD* we received didn't include a working help file, so we are working a bit in the dark. There are also the expected bugs that often crash the application. The build we are currently working with is over a month old now and I understand that Microsoft can't issue a downloadable update because every file (all 350MB) related to the *APCD* has been updated. We are supposed to receive a new version of the *APCD* with the beta of the *Links 2001* game soon, so it will be very interesting to see what has been updated, fixed, and enhanced.


Silvernail was asked to contribute a course to be included with the shipping version of Sierra's *PGA Championship 2000*. The result is the fantastic Canaveral Dunes.

How difficult is it to work with the *APCD* as compared to the other games' offerings?
For the average consumer, I think the current version of the *Links 2001* architect would be quite intimidating. At first glance, it doesn't come across as user-friendly as either *JN6* or *PGA 2000*. A single-hole designer like *JN6*'s will always be easier to learn for a newcomer as compared to *Links 2001*'s unified land plot. But, the *APCD* works quite well once you get accustomed to its interface.

Is the architect the feature that the Links series needed to regain to dominance or has it already been beaten?
I believe the course architect is going to be a very important part if the Links series is to regain its dominance of the computer golf game market beyond just sales. Until we see the final game, it is hard to determine how it will stack up to games like *PGA 2000* and *JN6*, which I feel have surpassed earlier versions when it comes to gameplay. PCG

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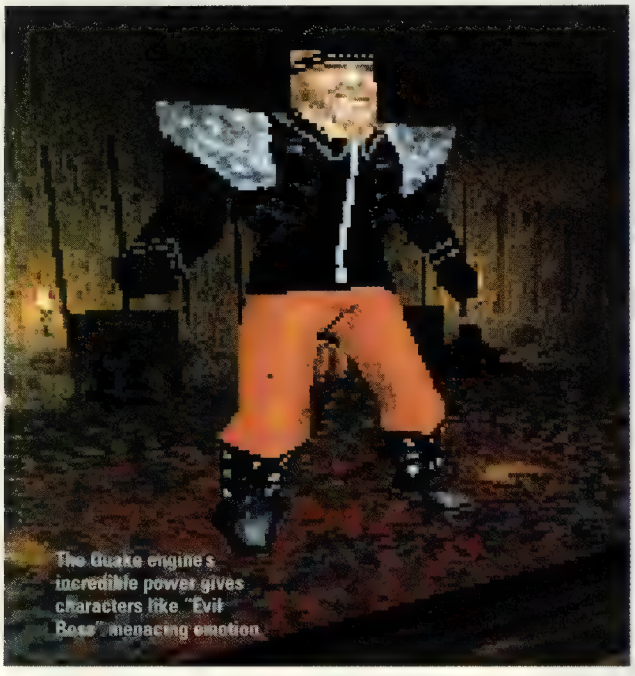
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Gang Wars and Other Stupid Quake Tricks

Colin plays film critic this month and asks a Very Important Question: Where are all the *Quake III* fan movies?

If there's one thing that history has taught us, it's that people are always drawn toward doing very strange things with Quake engines. You've got *Quake Rally*, a full-featured racing mod; *Text-Mode Quake*, playable over a TTY terminal; *Target Quake III*, a side-scrolling, run-and-jump game; and *Mario Arena*, a complete remake of the *Mario 64* castle, complete with the original textures. Yet the weirdest usage of the Quake engine has been in a steady decline over the years, and it's a shame. I refer, of course, to the death of the Quake movie.

Starting with the original *Quake*, players had the newfound ability to record and play back deathmatches. Eventually, someone started to fiddle with external camera angles, and had the revelation: "I bet I could make a movie with this." The first Quake movie — as far as I know — was *Ranger Gone Bad*, a quasi-amusing featurette where a clan blows up a camper with rocket launchers. Yes, *Ranger Gone Bad* might have been badly directed and poorly shot, but in the tradition of D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, it established the concept of epic narrative in a dramatic new medium.



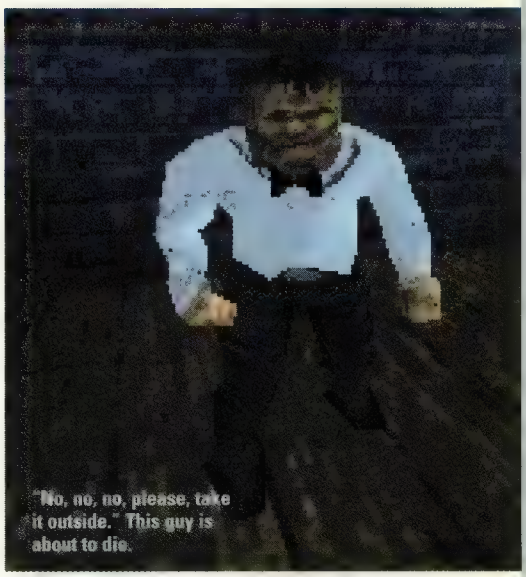
The Quake engine's incredible power gives characters like "Evil Boss" menacing emotion.

The pathological Quake community quickly picked up the slack, writing movie editing tools with support for pre-calculated zooms, pans, dollies, and cuts. Some designers added voices, music, and even "talking" skins. Nevertheless, most of the early films had the same draw as your classic Quake deathmatch: Red Quake Guy talks to White Quake Guy, and discovers that Blue Quake Guy killed his brother. Red Guy swings his axe several times for dramatic effect as he swears vengeance. Red Guy runs to the other side of DM2, where he finds Blue Guy waiting for him. Blue Guy taunts him a bit, swinging his axe in order to "emote." Someone pulls out a shotgun, shoots the other, and a five-minute deathmatch erupts. Roll credits.

One of *PC Gamer*'s favorites is C4 Films' classic *Gang Wars*. This 3D animated short tells the tale of a sadistic gang called the Warriors who enter a disco, kill two goons late on their loan payments, and slaughter thirty people on the dance floor with grenade launchers ("There can't be any witnesses!" rationalizes one burly Warrior). Police officers burst in to discover the carnage, and pledge to track down and exterminate the psychos responsible. Finally, the cops find the Warriors' hideout, and...well, you know.

But what makes *Gang Wars* so incredible is the fact that the filmmakers are not native speakers of English — I'm guessing they're Swedish — and their delivery of numerous American profanities is unintentionally hilarious. "Geeve oss our fohk-eeng muh-ney back!" is very likely to be the greatest line I have ever heard. And the concept of digitally raising or lowering a person's voice to avoid hiring new actors is a brilliant example of budgeting savvy; I fully expect Disney to follow suit with their next animated feature.

If that's not enough, other flicks that get the Killing Box Seal of Quality include *Blahbalicious*, which the community has dubbed "The Kentucky Fried Quake Movie," and *Operation Bay Shield*, a most non-PC excursion into counter-terrorist tactics. And if you're feeling adventurous, you can try to stomach all four hours of *The Seal of Nehara*, a whopping 90-meg retelling of the Quake story. Yow. All of this stuff should be readily available at the Quake Cineplex (*www.planetquake.com/cineplex*), complete with mini-reviews. A word of warning, however: the level of humor in Quake movies can vary. While some are ridiculously entertaining, others have the same amount of humor as your average User Friendly strip, which is akin to being punched in the genitals multiple times by an angry chimpanzee. Caveat emptor.



"No, no, no, please, take it outside." This guy is about to die.

Sadly, the glory days of zero-budget Quake moviemaking have faded to black. The only *Quake III* movie I could find was a so-so, half-hour action-drama called *Quad God*, but that had been edited as actual video — essentially defeating the gimmick of in-game moviemaking. On the other hand, a site called *Machinima.com* has materialized, and these guys seem to take this Quake movie stuff pretty seriously. I personally consider Quake flicks to be at the same level of cinematic integrity as, say, my high school animation projects, where LEGO men got run over by tractors and blew off each others' limbs with shotguns, but to each his own. In any case, you should give Quake movies a gander — it's just like Cannes, only with more polygons and infinitely more flying giblets. PCG

MICHAEL WOLF
alternatelives@pcgamer.com



New Rules for the New Century

After eleven years, AD&D gets a facelift — Wolf takes a look at some of the changes in store for CRPG fans.

When PC games first appeared, it wasn't long before someone realized that pen-and-paper roleplaying games would work perfectly on a computer (and appeal to a similar demographic). Creating digital pen-and-paper universes would introduce hordes of players to both systems, and turn a tidy profit in the meantime. And it worked out pretty well — the lonely pen-and-paper fan had a roleplaying outlet, and the computer geek finally found out what this Dungeons & Dragons rage was all about.

The mixing of the two worked nicely — the rules laid forth by the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons game let unknown developers focus on creating intriguing characters and scenarios, and the system itself lent credibility to new computer games from these teams.

Eleven years have passed since TSR released the second edition of Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, and the guides penned first by Gary Gygax in the First Edition and then David "Zeb" Cook in the Second Edition have become something of a standard for roleplaying games of all shapes and sizes. Many new systems have come out for both the pen-and-paper and computer RPG genres, but none have matched the world recognition of AD&D.

When Wizards of the Coast, the company that made it big with *Magic: The Gathering*, purchased TSR, fans of the system worried that something evil might befall their beloved franchise. Well, something has — Wizards of the Coast has just released the Third Edition of the famed AD&D roleplaying game this August.

This probably isn't a big deal to most, but those of us who have played AD&D for the last several years have plenty to say about the new rules. Some changes are major, and others are pretty minor, but most of them affect the flow of the game and the feel of all the characters to some degree. The changes are too numerous to even attempt listing them all, but some are certainly worth mentioning.

For one thing, multi-class characters are a whole new ball game. Characters now can gain experience in any level when they level up, with no limitations on class or stats. For instance, a third-level thief can easily decide to become a first-level wizard. Granted, if the character's intelligence is below average, he'll be an exceptionally poor wizard, but he'll still get the hit point rolls and skill modifiers of a first-level wizard, while still being able to backstab and pick pockets like a thief.

Other changes affect combat. The THAC0 (To Hit Armor Class 0) has finally been killed — instead, each character simply rolls a 20-sided die, calculates in any attack bonuses, and has to roll higher than the enemy's Armor Class (AC). It's all very straightforward and simple this time around, and the lack of calculations will certainly be a relief to the arithmetically challenged.

The new rules also introduce three new classes — the Sorcerer, the Monk, and the Barbarian. Each of them basically lives up to some of the standard tenants of fantasy universes. Monks excel in hand-to-hand combat, and can do just as much damage with a well-placed kick as a well-swung sword. Barbarians are the massive fighters, with bonuses to strength and constitution. Sorcerers are basically book-less Wizards — they don't have to memorize spells or carry components or a spell book like Wizards, instead they cast spells by strength of will alone. Because of this, their most important asset is their charisma.

So why is a columnist for a PC game magazine talking about a new set of pen-and-paper rules? Simply because the days of CRPGs using the Second Edition rules is nearly over. Interplay's *Baldur's Gate II* will be the last game really to use these rules, and it's already incorporating some elements of Third Edition — namely the new character classes. The first game to use the complete range of new rules will be *Pool of Radiance: Ruins of Myth Drannor* from SSI, which will be followed by *Neverwinter Nights* from BioWare.

The Player's Guide for Third Edition AD&D is already available. The Dungeon Master's Guide should be out by the time you read this, soon followed by the Monster Manual. Expect to see more of Third Edition in the coming year — I can guarantee that developers are going to take advantage of the excitement generated by the new set of rules. PCG



Pool of Radiance: Ruins of Myth Drannor from SSI will be the first game to utilize Wizards of the Coast's Third Edition of AD&D rules.



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DESKTOP GENERAL

Gettin' Medieval, One More Time

Incredible Simulations revamps its greatest hit, and it's great bloody fun for even hardcore wargamers.

Two years ago, Incredible Simulations quietly (well, it had to be "quietly," since there was no budget for advertising) released a delectable tactical game entitled, simply, *Medieval*. It was a snap to learn, fast and fun to play (the average scenario could be played during a lunch break), and featured an editing program that was idiot-proof and which gave full reign to the player's imagination.

Medieval was well-received by reviewers (myself included) and gained a passionate cult following. Fortunately, it was a large enough cult to turn Incredible from a one-man hobby into a viable independent company. In fact, it could be said that Incredible, along with its business partner HPS Sims, created the paradigm of the small, feisty, beholden-to-nobody wargame company.

Which puts Jeff Lapkoff, founder and one-man band, in a unique position to observe and comment upon the extraordinary changes that have taken place in the wargaming genre. Jeff did not, of course, set out consciously to create a new business model. He just wanted to see an Alamo game for the PC, and since nobody else was interested, he took the plunge. *Defend the Alamo* appeared in 1993 (in DOS only, of course) and it did well enough, largely through word of mouth, to inspire a second DOS game (*Custer's Last Command*) and a jolly Kipling-esque romp through the *Zulu Wars*.

I asked Jeff recently if he felt "responsible" for the robust growth of indie wargames. He modestly demurred and gave more credit to Scott Hamilton of HPS. "I guess in a tangential way we probably showed others that it could be done — probably by force of will more than anything else," he says. "I think, however, that the main factor in the emergence of the indie wargame publishers is that many of the major 'name' designers who've gravitated to that format had been shown the door by the major publishers who used to employ them. The infusion of talent, energy, and vision has been amazing."

> "I am reminded of something Frank Zappa said when someone asked him if he thought jazz was dead. Frank paused and said, 'No, it's not dead...it just smells funny.'"
>
> **— Jeff Lapkoff, founder of Incredible Simulations**

Is the present state of affairs only a trend, or it is really the wave of the future?

"I think you'll see the split between mainstream publishers and wargames widen," Jeff says. "Sure, you'll see a *Shogun* or another *Panzer General* from a major company every now and then, but the hex-and-counter stuff is all going indie. I think this is probably a good thing for many of us, because we might get a chance to see a wider range of topics covered.

"Games like *Combat Mission* probably represent the tip of the iceberg for the future of wargaming, from a production standpoint. Almost anything that a major publisher will even consider has to have some element of 3D. It's what the market demands. Up to now, though, only the majors could afford to give you real 3D. *Combat Mission* proves that an indie company can do that, as well.

"So I don't feel that PC wargaming is near extinction; it's just no longer part of mainstream gaming. I'm reminded of something Frank Zappa said when someone asked him if he thought jazz was dead. Frank paused and said, 'No, it's not dead ...it just smells funny.'"

As for *Medieval 2*, it's loaded with new features (including optional commands for an entire "wing," which considerably streamlines playing of the larger scenarios). Missile units can now perform reaction fire, which pumps up the dynamics of gameplay. The AI is palpably more aggressive. And there are eight or nine new scenarios, all of them recreating battles you've never seen gamed before.

If you loved the original, you'll find even more to love in this sequel. If you haven't played the original, you're in for a treat.

Download the free demo from *www.IncredibleSimulations.com*, and if you like what you see, send 'em some money and Jeff will send you an unlock code.

Note: this game-access code is *not* locked to a specific hard drive, which means that if you upgrade your system, the same code will work for the new installation. Good move, Jeff.

PCG



Vlad the Impaler (a.k.a. Dracula) defends Bucharest against the Turks, 1476, in *Medieval 2*.

ANDY MAHOOD
simcolumn@pcgamer.com



Flights of Fancy

They're hardly hardcore sims, but these new "relaxed realism" games may be able to revitalize the genre.

Screw it. I've decided to take a break from reporting on the death of flight sims this month and for a change of pace I'm going to indulge in some good old-fashioned anticipatory drooling. You see, once you get past the admittedly unpleasant realization that hardcore flight sims are thinning out faster than Rob Smith's hairline, you'd have to be a subterranean cave dweller not to have noticed that there are a number of intriguing new flight "games" appearing on the radar. For all of their avionics and flight model inaccuracies, a lot of these titles still look like they're gonna offer some intense gameplay.

In fact, by the time you read this, a few of them will be gold and on their way toward landing on retail shelves. I had a chance to put some pre-release beta versions through their paces in the last couple of weeks, and lemme tell you something, some of these puppies are so much damned fun to play that they should come with a sticker on the box warning you about lost productivity time. Okay, so maybe these games don't all adhere to the strict laws of Newtonian physics, but hell, even us hardcore simmers have to learn to lighten up every once in awhile.

ECHELON

●●● BETHESDA

Okay, so Bethesda's futuristic new aerial shooter may not be a flight sim in the traditional sense, but this puppy isn't really what you'd call your conventional space combat game either. You don't get to jink around in the forgiving void of space here, because a very real hard deck remains directly below you at all times. *Star Wars*-type craft outfitted with advanced beam weapons may be a stretch for most flight sim fans, but the game's varied flight models, drop-dead gorgeous graphics, and superb damage effects provide more than enough ammo to merit the attention of anyone who likes to fly around and shoot things. Besides, any flight sim jock worth his salt should be able to teach those panty-waist mouse-gripping "Mech" gamers some serious flying lessons, and playing *Echelon* may be the best way to prove it.

JET FIGHTER IV

●●● MISSION STUDIOS/TALONSOFT

A PC mainstay since its introduction back in 1989, the JetFighter series from Mission Studios has been a poster child for "relaxed realism" jet sims for over a decade now. Featuring a trio of U.S. warplanes (the F-14, FA-18E, and F-22), *Jetfighter IV* is poised to carry on the franchise's unabashed tradition of eye-candy first and realism second. So what if you can pull 9-G turns without any significant speed bleeding effects, or pick up a bogey 20 miles in arrears on your 360° radar display? The planes certainly look sweet, and when you slide a Sidewinder up the butt of some fleeing MiG-29, the sunuvabitch will disintegrate into one of the most pyrotechnically perfect fireballs that you're ever gonna see.

Will *JF IV* go on to sell a half-million copies and single-handedly revitalize the entire sim market? Not bloody likely. But, as with *Crimson Skies*, any game that can get people accustomed to using a joystick again is a good thing. A very good thing.

When push comes to shove, complaining about the scarcity of hardcore flight sims isn't gonna do a goddamn thing to get the genre kick-started again anyway. If you're a halfway decent sim-pilot, then you should be able to fly anything with an engine and some means of lift, so here are three highly entertaining new flying games for you to go out and prove it. With some luck, the suits at Hasbro, Havas, and EA might just sit up and taking notice of your buying habits.

PCG



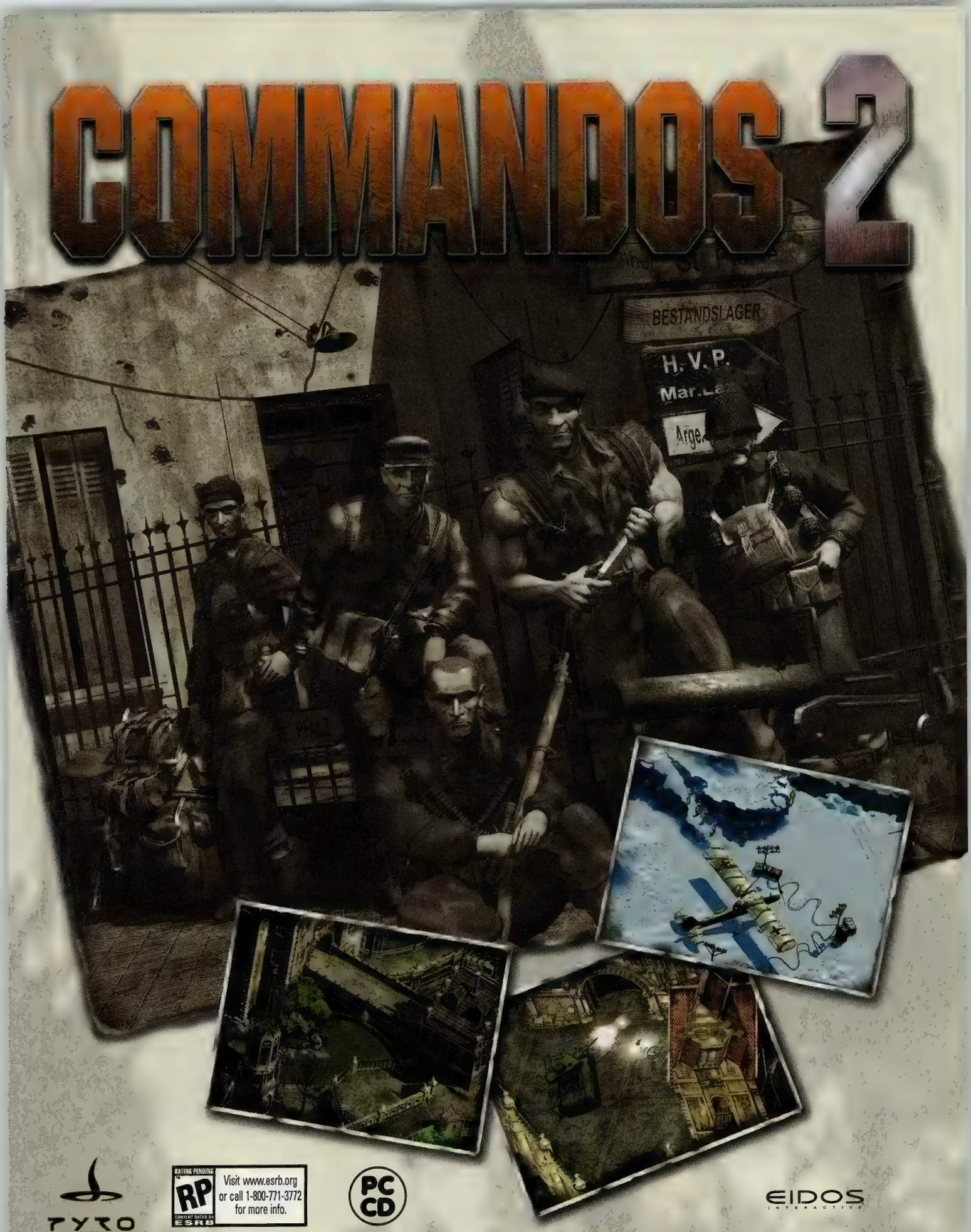
***Crimson Skies* may not have the most advanced physics, but man is it fun.**

CRIMSON SKIES

●●● MICROSOFT/ZIPPER INTERACTIVE

Some pundits have suggested that this imaginative new aerial combat game from Microsoft could well be the savior of the flight sim genre as we know it. *Crimson Skies* offers a decidedly over-the-top flying experience in which you assume the role of a swashbuckling rogue aviator in an "alternate history" U.S. of the late 1930s. The game's convoluted plot has some fractured nation-states battling each other feverishly for air supremacy, and individual missions can range from straightforward Zeppelin-busting and dogfighting exercises to stunt flying assignments for a Hollywood movie studio. A suitably eclectic collection of propeller-driven planes is also up for grabs here, which meshes perfectly with *Crimson Skies*' campy gameplay structure. Fans of LucasArts' classic *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* will probably feel right at home as they swoop down on a squadron of enemy pilots in one of the game's dual-hull, pusher-prop Peacemaker 370s.

Crimson Skies may not offer the most realistic flight dynamics but, as an aerial combat game that illustrates the value of the venerable joystick as the controller of choice, it might just crack that door of opportunity open wide enough for some real flight sims to begin staging a comeback.



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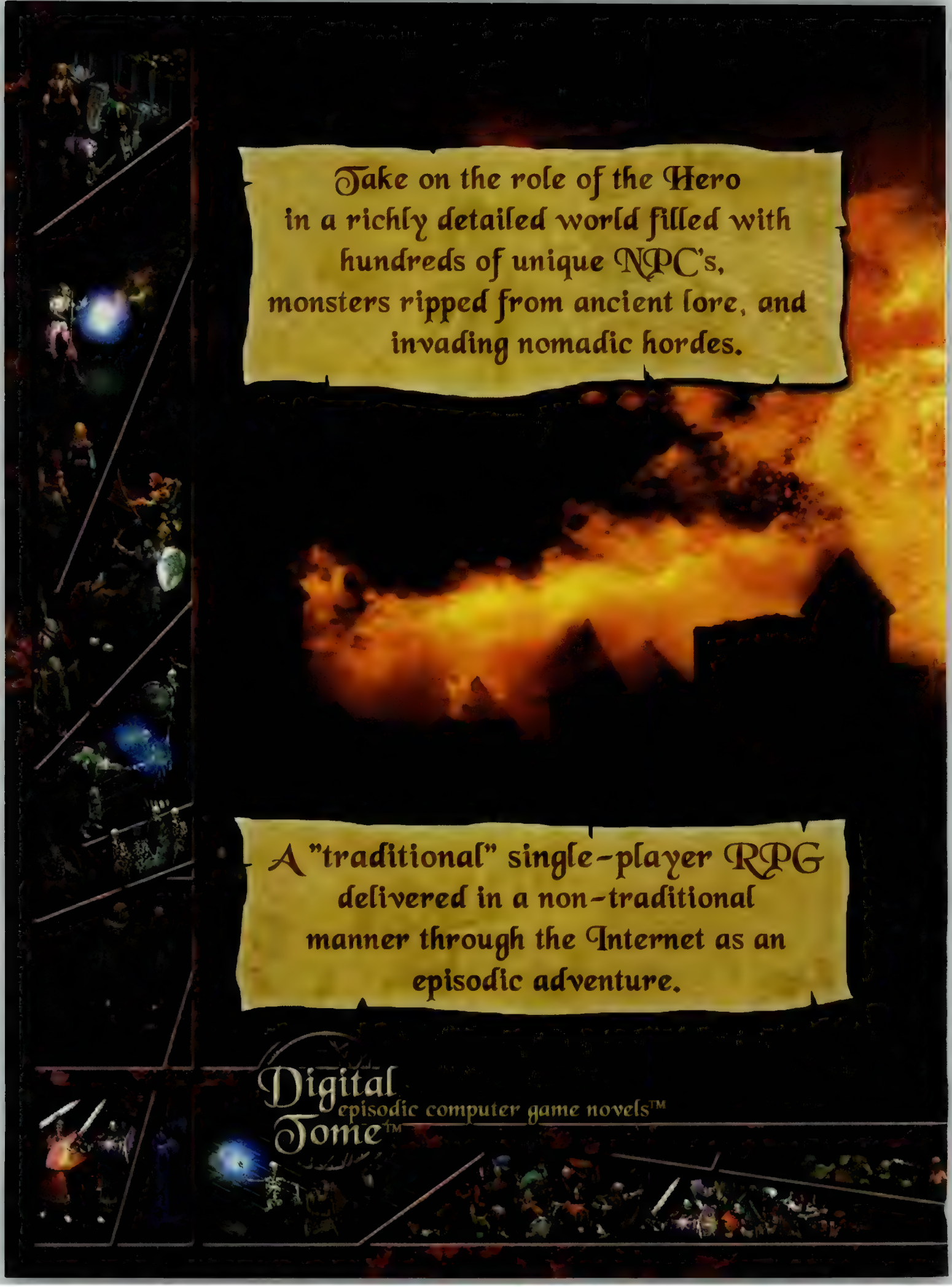
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SHIVER of sword, and MANIfester
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and DECADENCE raging
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by the
BESTIAL SARK AMEN.

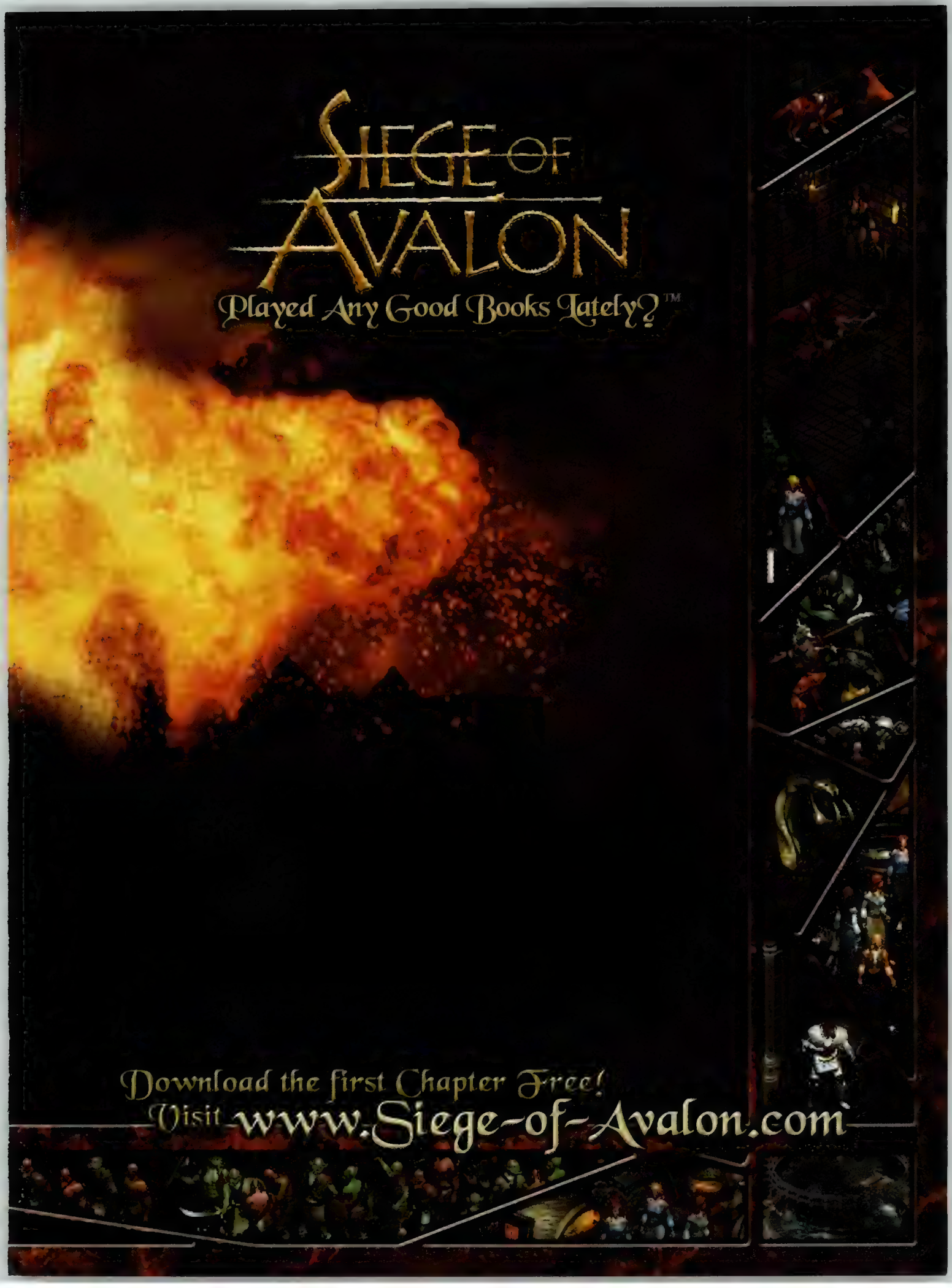
WHEN FIRST I BORE ON AND SAW
the pillage AND LOOTING
by those bound in EVIL,
I, RAGNAR the MIGHTY;
hit my KNEES IN
the MOST VIOLENT of retches
after surveying the SIGHTS of
three-day. Stoll is left
lying stretched AND MAIMED
in the FIELD of BATTLE.

AS I EMERGED,
UNHURT AND UNSCATHED
FROM the UNDERWORLD
I FOUND, IT WAS HE,
CONRACK the CONQUEROR,
WHO SCAPEGOATED
the BLAME AND BANE, OF SARK AMEN'S
ATTACKS.



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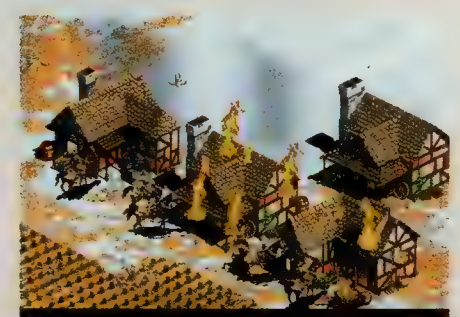
Age of Empires II: The Conquerors

The strategies and tactics of a typical *Age of Empires II* game are incredibly fluid, changing from languid buildup to frenzied, multi-pronged assault in an instant. Planning those events effectively is the difference between the skilled player and the novice. There is no one strategy that will win, particularly if you are playing against other people, but there are a variety of ways to prepare for the inevitable conflicts, and you'd better believe they're in this guide.

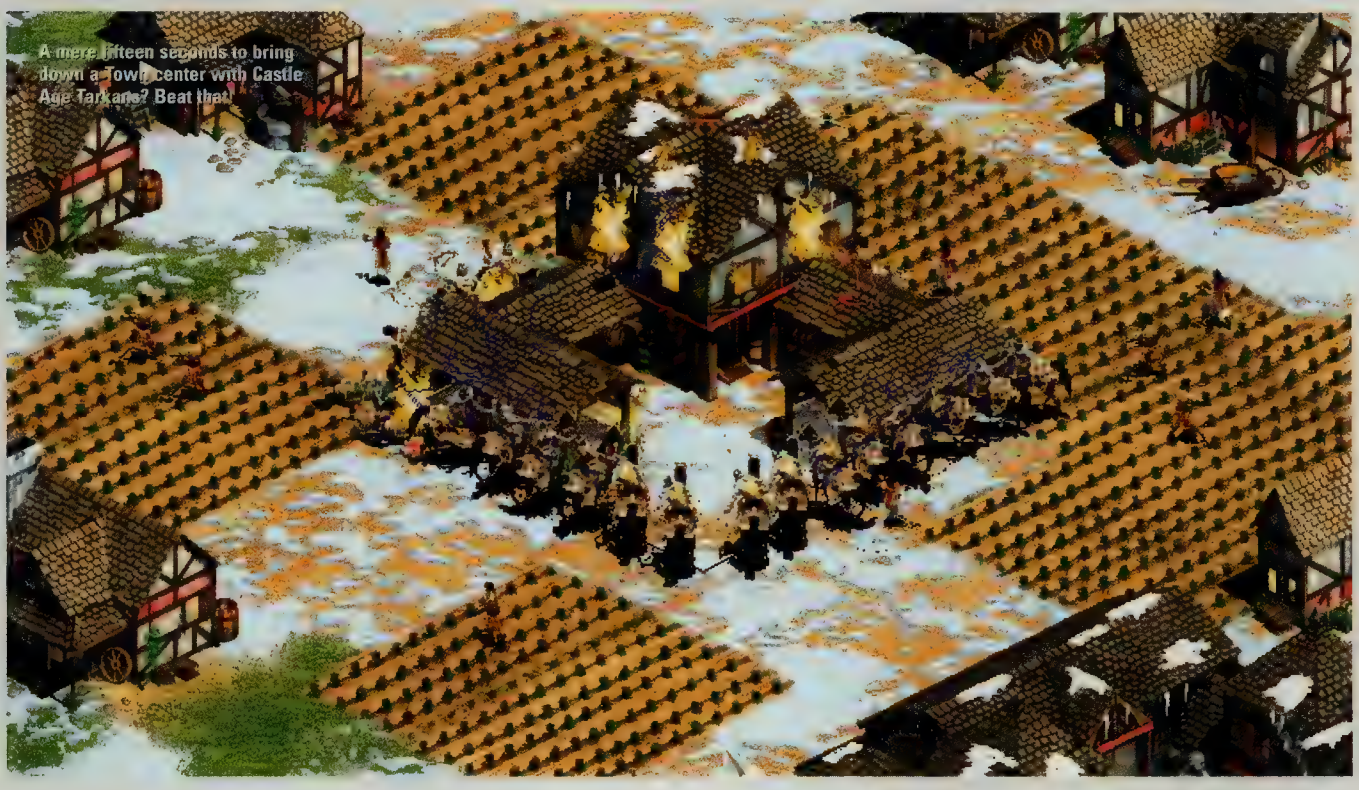
GENERAL BASICS

1. Be offensive: When you attack the enemy, you force him to defend or die. Every unit he has will be redirected to the task of eliminating you, so do not hesitate to send troops to slaughter villagers who are "merely" chopping wood or send a galley or two in to destroy his fishing boats. As long as you either retreat when things get too hot or know before you attack that it's a suicide mission and accept the losses, you'll damage your opponent in three critical ways. For starters, you'll disrupt his command flow — he'll have to stop what he's doing and deal with you. Next, you'll be exerting stress on his economy (see General Basics #2). And finally, he will suffer psychological damage in the form of fear — he'll know that you have an army, know where he is, and are eager to come and get him. If you play offensively (as recommended here), you will not need to rely on walls and guard towers nearly as much because your foe will almost always be less inclined to attack and much more likely to repair and build defenses in preparation for your next onslaught. Here's a basic rule: if you have an army, always use it and simply retreat if you encounter overwhelming odds.

2. Economy is everything: Try to think of every unit and building in the game in terms of its cost. When you see the overall costs of what you're building and fighting with (and against), you'll find that being a smart spender will win you more games than just about anything else. When fighting Knights, for instance, if you lose two times their number in Long Swordsmen, you are still winning since their cost is effectively a quarter that of the Knights. Don't hesitate to send "low cost" units into a battle that you know you will lose since doing so will often force your enemy to pay the cost of your rebuilding many times over, thus leaving him without the money required to support future armies. Rule #2 here assumes that you have control of the map — if you don't, move on to Rule #3



Tarkans can decimate a town before the enemy even notices what's going on.



A mere fifteen seconds to bring down a Town center with Castle Age Tarkans? Beat that.

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3. This land is my land: Think of it this way: "I already own the whole map and every iota of its resources. Anything my opponents take away from me is theft." You should not only be constantly hampering his plans for expansion, but be ceaselessly expanding yourself. Scout the entire map with your scout cavalry the instant the game starts and make note of the resource locations. Try to expand into areas close to your enemy, so that you can deprive him of his fruits. Build mines near resources that he has not appropriated, because even if you only manage to drain a few loads of gold or stone out of a mine before dying, it's usually worth the small loss of life.

4. The cycle of life (or Rock-Paper-Scissors): Every unit has both a predator and a prey. As such, learn which units are which. Problems with cavalry? Use Pikemen. Too many Archers at the gates? Build skirmishers. Monks giving you a headache? It's cavalry time. Be prepared to attack when you see prey, and retreat when you see predator.

5. Game flow: Always remember that there are four separate ages to any game of *Age II*: Dark, Feudal, Castle, and Imperial. Each culture handles certain ages better than others. Some cultures, like the Huns for example, can build up armies very quickly since they don't require houses. Always know your culture's strengths and weaknesses in the given ages so that you don't get wiped off the face of the planet as a result of bold-faced ignorance.


A small group of Jaguar Warriors...


...can quickly massacre anything on two feet.

6. Remain flexible: If your original plan for domination by using cavalry has been cut to ribbons by the masses of Halberdiers your foe has created, maybe it's time to go naval and bombard him from the shore — maybe a few horde-smashing Siege Onagers will wipe that smile off his face. If you lose your base, don't quit; see if you can evacuate your villagers elsewhere and start again — you never know how much it might have cost him to complete that last attack....maybe he's all dried up! Lastly, throughout the game, think of how you would defeat yourself if you were your enemy, and prepare for that event accordingly. This will keep you strategically limber and prepared for obvious assaults.

NEW CIVILIZATIONS

>>> Aztecs

The Aztecs, like the Goths, are an infantry-oriented culture. Because they are able to produce units slightly faster (15 percent) than other cultures, they are a good choice for Dark/Feudal age assaults, before the enemy can produce cavalry. Rushing the



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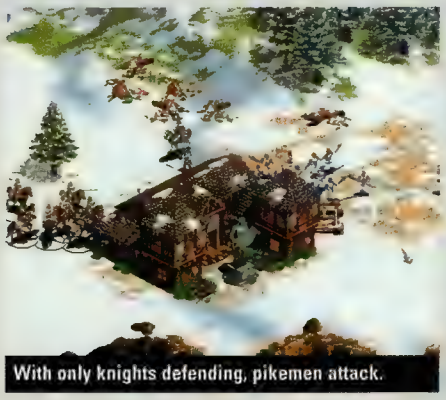
enemy with Eagle Warriors is a successful tactic, since they move quickly enough to get in and out of an enemy's base before taking too many losses. Once they hit Castle age, however, the lack of cavalry will hurt them as Knights have more speed and twice the hit-points and armor of the Aztec's unique unit, the Jaguar Warrior. In the Imperial age, this unit comes back into strength due to the Elite Jaguar Warrior upgrade and the Unique technology Garland Wars, which will make them about as good as Paladins, but at less than half the cost. Huge swarms of inexpensive Elite Jaguar Warriors are your goal in the late game, since they will go through infantry like butter, and hold their own against equal numbers of any cavalry.

>>> Mayans

Not surprisingly, the Mayans are similar to the Aztecs in that their cavalry-free culture forces them to focus their strengths on their unique units in every age but Castle. The extra villager they start with may not seem like a huge bonus, but it will prove to be vital in the first few ages when combined with their longer lasting resources (you'll see that the Mayans quickly gather resources early on). Because they'll have a lot of income early and because archers cost them significantly less as the ages pass, focus on amassing large groups of archers and backing them up with the cheap and tough Eagle Warriors until the Castle age. When you reach the Castle age, it's time to produce Plumed Archers, which will not only be 20 percent cheaper than their closest equivalent, the Arbalest, but will also be able to withstand more of a beating due to their higher hit-points. The Mayans are dicey to play due to the difficulty of balancing the massive amounts of Eagle Warriors and archers (Plumed or otherwise) you are going to need to send into battle, but when done well, the combination is deadly.

>>> Huns

The Huns are unique in that they don't require you to build houses. Because of this, the Huns are very quick and easy to expand. For the Dark/Feudal ages, you'll want to produce as many villagers as you can support, quickly gathering the wood and food you'll need to create an army rapidly. You will have a choice in the early game of whether or not you want to try and rush your enemy with the extra troops you can make, or focus on quickly jumping through the ages with a massive volume of villagers. If you choose to "power level" through the ages, you'll be well served by the deceptively strong Tarkan unique unit. Although you might be tempted to treat this strong cavalry unit like a Paladin, don't. It's strengths lie in its speed and ability to destroy buildings, so send them past


With only knights defending, pikemen attack.


Where did all the knights go?


Tarkans finish the job, cheaply and efficiently.



Korean towers only get better with age and are best used to lock down available resources.

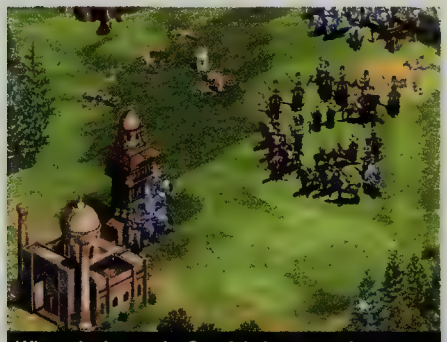
approaching armies and have them attack buildings instead. Keep the enemy army busy with some Paladins and cheap (25 to 30 percent cheaper) Cavalry Archers, and you'll be amazed at what quick work they'll make of an enemy base.

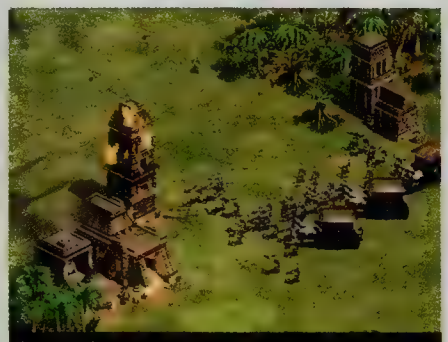
>>> Spanish

Possibly the strongest of the new cultures, the Spanish culture lives and breathes gold. With a 33 percent increase in build speed, they are quickly able to construct Guard Towers near enemies early in the game, both to harass the enemy and to protect resources the enemy might want to take from you. Because their strongest units are expensive and don't appear until the Castle age, you'll want to focus on defense and gold acquisition until you get there. Throughout their buildup, you'll appreciate the gold savings in that you won't have to pay gold for Blacksmith upgrades. Once you reach Castle/Imperial age, the fun really begins since you'll finally have access to two of the most powerful unique units in the game. By creating Conquistadors (mounted handcannoneers), Paladins, and Missionaries (mounted Monks), you will have a self-healing, mounted army that dishes out fantastic short- and long-range damage. Just be sure to research Fervor so that your Missionaries can keep up with the rest of your cavalry. By using this mobile death-squad to protect your Bombard Cannons and Trebuchets, you'll casually be able to eliminate the strongest of enemy bases.

>>> Koreans

The Koreans are balanced well to survive the early game with villagers whose line of sight bonus will help them find resources quickly. Capitalize on their strength in Towers. Build them near the enemy and in choke points during the Dark and Feudal ages and lay walls around them to slow attacks. Since they get free Tower upgrades, your early placements will payoff many times over. They have the full archer tech tree, so you should focus on upgrading your ranged weapons to make your Arbalests, Towers, and eventual War Wagons all the more deadly. Once you've made it to the Castle/Imperial ages, a combination of War Wagons, Mangonels/Onagers (with range upgrade!), and Arbalests will compose an army that will be extremely difficult to get close to, particularly if you have Champions. This makes your army easy to use as a defensive barrier for your castle-wrecking Trebuchets and Bombard Cannons.


When playing as the Spanish, be sure to have a strong defense to protect your vast resources.


Protected towers and a well-balanced army — that's the key to playing as the Koreans.

NEW CASTLE AGE UNITS

>>> Petard

If you can protect them for the time required to reach their intended target, Petards are an excellent strike unit. Since their cost in gold is so low, use them to demolish select buildings. If you see a building that's not heavily guarded — blow it up! It's also excellent for taking down walls since three of them will destroy even Fortified Walls. Ten Petards will destroy any building in the game — including Wonders.

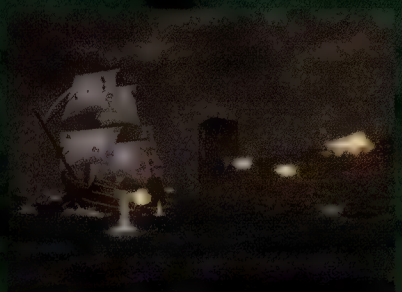
>>> Halberdier

This the answer to the Paladin rush. The Halberdiers are cheap, costing only wood and food, and they dish out enough damage to take down mounted units very quickly. Only use them in groups and be prepared to lose many of them since they have no armor at all. PCG

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The choices in Sea Dogs are endless...

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Sea Dogs

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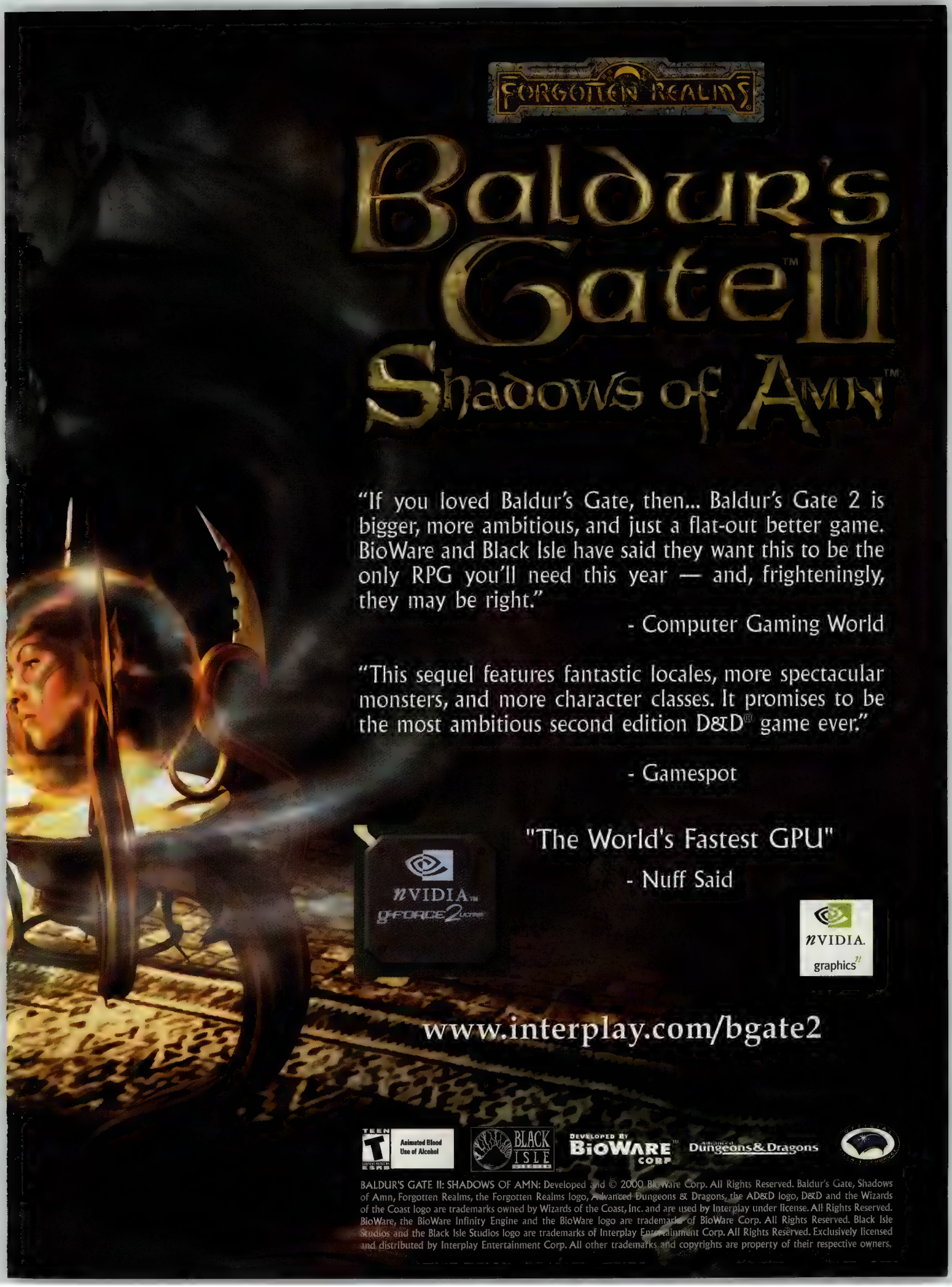
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Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K.2

While she sure is nice to look at, Julie also happens to have an insatiable appetite for destruction. But it won't be easy guiding her through Ritual's colorful world of Grawlix and Creepers, so here's a complete walkthrough to help you take care of business.

WIN a copy of *F.A.K.K.2*

This ain't no typical strategy guide. Oh no, by jiminy, this is the ultra special strategy, the reading of which can score you a copy of *F.A.K.K.2*. "How so?" you cry. By spotting the 15 classic rock albums and artists named amidst the prose of this wonderful strategy. List all 15 and send them to *eyewitness@pcgamer.com* with the word *F.A.K.K.2* in the subject line. Simple as that.

Gearing Up

You begin *Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K.2* at Julie's house, with several precious Eden water vials lying around. To get all the water you need: go in the house; check the patio; pull the crates to climb up to the roof; jump from the roof to the tree branch; and finally use the lattice by the exit to get the rest of the water. After you have gathered everything, head to the training.

Creeper Pens

Once school's out, exit the training room and check the nearby stream for some hidden ampoules, and then proceed into town. Talk to everyone for some backstory and a mini-game using the sling. After you visit the tavern, the action begins. At this point, your sword is your only weapon, so practice the combos. Make your way to the first boss monster, the Vymish Mama. You will only need four detonators and some speed. Wait for her to rotate away from you, then run up and plant a bomb next to each of the four glowing green rocks. Use the crates for cover, because if she can see you, she can kill you.



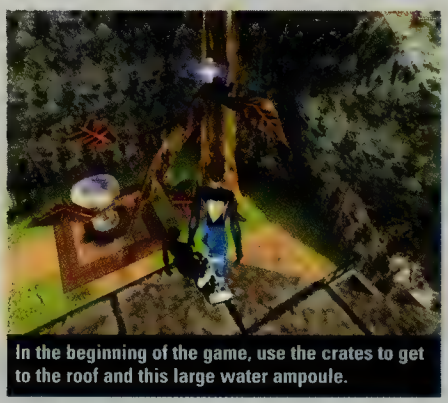
When you master the sword combos, you'll be able to quickly kill the Grawlix.

Market Place

The market place is important not for what you kill, but for what you get. First, grab the small shield by climbing the scaffolding by some workmen. Then get the pistol by climbing the shed in the courtyard with the asteroid in the middle of it. Finally, the firesword is about 30 feet off the ground down a side street. However, you'll need 90 percent Eden water to make the long jump from the ledge. Finally, talk to a paranoid villager at the town center. Before you leave, Otto will give you his crossbow.

Underground and Sewers

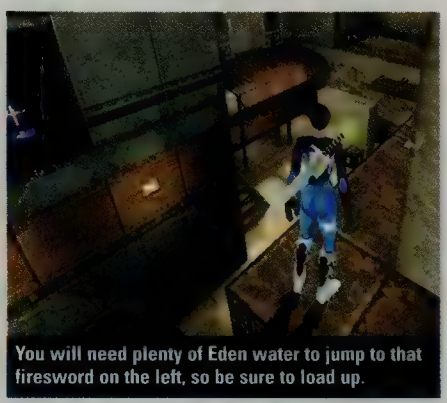
After you kill the first Grawlix, climb up the nearby vine. Inside the first chamber will be two more vines, one of which leads to your stash of weapons. Make your way through the sewers, being sure to grab the



In the beginning of the game, use the crates to get to the roof and this large water ampoule.



When you exit the training room, check this stream for more than regular water.



You will need plenty of Eden water to jump to that firesword on the left, so be sure to load up.

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One easy way to kill a Flesh Binder is to drop this fan on him. You can also use pipes and crates.


Don't waste bullets on this guy — the flame-thrower and firesword are deadly to the Harvester.


When you're done lighting him up, don't forget to grab his weapon, the important soul-sucker.

Fakk Axe along the way. Use your shield and pistol to kill the Lymphorns around the shield generator; then turn the dials until all the crystals are aligned.

Market Under Attack! and Otto's Lab

The Flesh Binder is an annoying machine head that can't be killed with Julie's current weapons. To kill them, use heavy objects like crates, pipes, and that enormous fan. Don't bother attacking the recruiter; he can't be killed. Just move on to Otto's Lab and be sure to grab the uzi and the shotgun while you're there.

Town Center Attacked!

Thanks to Otto, Julie looks dressed to kill in her red bikini and leather chaps. You will be attacked immediately by a flock of Happy Masks. You can either kill 'em all, or simply run by them to the rear of the chapel. Once there, grab the flamethrower and some water. The second boss is the Soul Harvester. Although he can teleport and drain your water, don't fear the reaper, because they are very vulnerable to fire. Use your new flamethrower and the firesword before moving on.

Outskirts of Eden and Cliffside

Make your way carefully along the cliffs. Sometimes you will have to use the wall hug maneuver; be sure to look for leaves in an updraft to reach higher places. At the entrance to the caves, there is a handy bazooka, perfect for overkill. However, don't waste bullets or rockets on the Grawlix, because a single well-timed firesword combo will kill them in a hurry. At the end of the cliffs, you will face the Soul Harvester again. Use the flamethrower to toast him and the firesword to finish him off. Be sure to grab his soul-sucker, because you'll need it to win the game.

Mooagly Swamp

You begin this level with the shell shield from Obidiah and the gas pods for your sling. Just after you start, proceed to the right. On a large tree stump, you'll find the powerful but costly chainsaw sword. Avoid using it — save your gas for the flame-thrower. There isn't enough ammo to go blasting through the swamps, but quick use of the flamesword/uzi combo will get you past the Dark Creepers. Deeper into the swamp there are three Tiki Runes. The first is just after the pit of spinning spikes, and the second and third are up in the tree with the spiral trunk. Return all three runes to the Tiki Island, and you'll be given the horn of conjuring. Also by that tree is a cabin; enter through the roof to grab the leg armor.

Swamp Confrontation

With the new purple and blue outfit comes a pair of uzis. But be careful not to waste bullets or rocket shells; you'll need them later. Once you've made it onto the raft at the pier, you'll face the next boss, the Shkynerpad. To beat it, simply circle strafe and kill a few of the outer tentacles — you do not have to kill them all. Once you've made an opening, wait for the central pod to call lightning to itself. While it is "recharging," it is vulnerable. Hit it with a few well-placed rockets, and you'll be on your way.

Meet with Gruff

Follow the path of the river. Don't waste gas and rockets on the Creepers. Instead, use the powerful sword/uzi combos. Healing fruit on nearby ledges will replenish your life. Once you meet Gruff, he'll explain more of the planet's history, and will lend you the powerful chaingun, one of the best toys in the attic.

The Cemetery of the We

Julie is back in black thanks to Gruff, and ready for the final push. First, grab the lightning sword. It is much more powerful than the other swords, and combined with an uzi, it makes Julie a killing machine. But there are other special items hidden in the cemetery as well. Between the temples of wind and blood, there is a pressure plate on a ledge. It will open a secret door above


Find all three Tiki Runes and you'll be rewarded with a special weapon called the horn of conjuring.

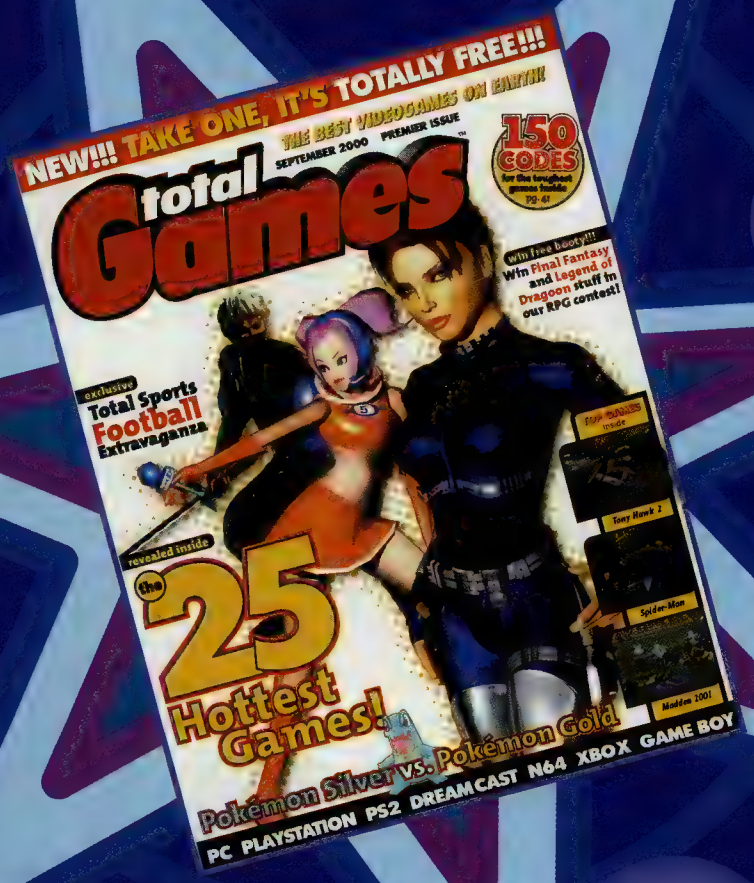
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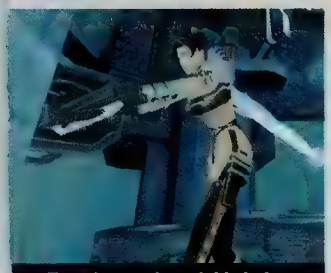
Julie. Use the vines to climb up and grab the healing potion. In an alcove to the left of the temple of the wind, is a secret room with shoulder armor. To the left of the temple of water are some vines. Climb up the vines and jump to the opposite ledge. Follow it around to a secret room with a potion of Eden water. To the right of the temple of water are a series of ledges that lead to windows. Through those windows is a temple with a potion of protection. Next to the potion are some coffins, and inside one of those coffins are some precious gas and rockets. After collecting all of the items, move on to the temple of wind.

The Wind of Spirit

Follow the main path by jumping from platform to platform and heading toward the blowing masks. Make your way into the temple, killing the two Vymish mothers, and pushing both of the glowing blocks. To the left is a simple timing puzzle, but to the right is a lock and switch puzzle. To solve it, turn the right valve twice, then the middle valve three times. Go to the altar to retrieve the stone, then use the blowing masks to fly to the top of the stone with the health potion. Finally, use the masks outside the door to fly across the platforms and to the end of the level.



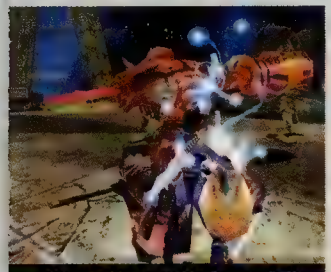
Keep moving when fighting this boss. Death will be from behind.



Turn the cranks quickly before the floor gives way.



The chaingun will make quick work of the Flesh Binders.



Once Tyler is on his knees, kill him with his own sword.

The Water of Purity

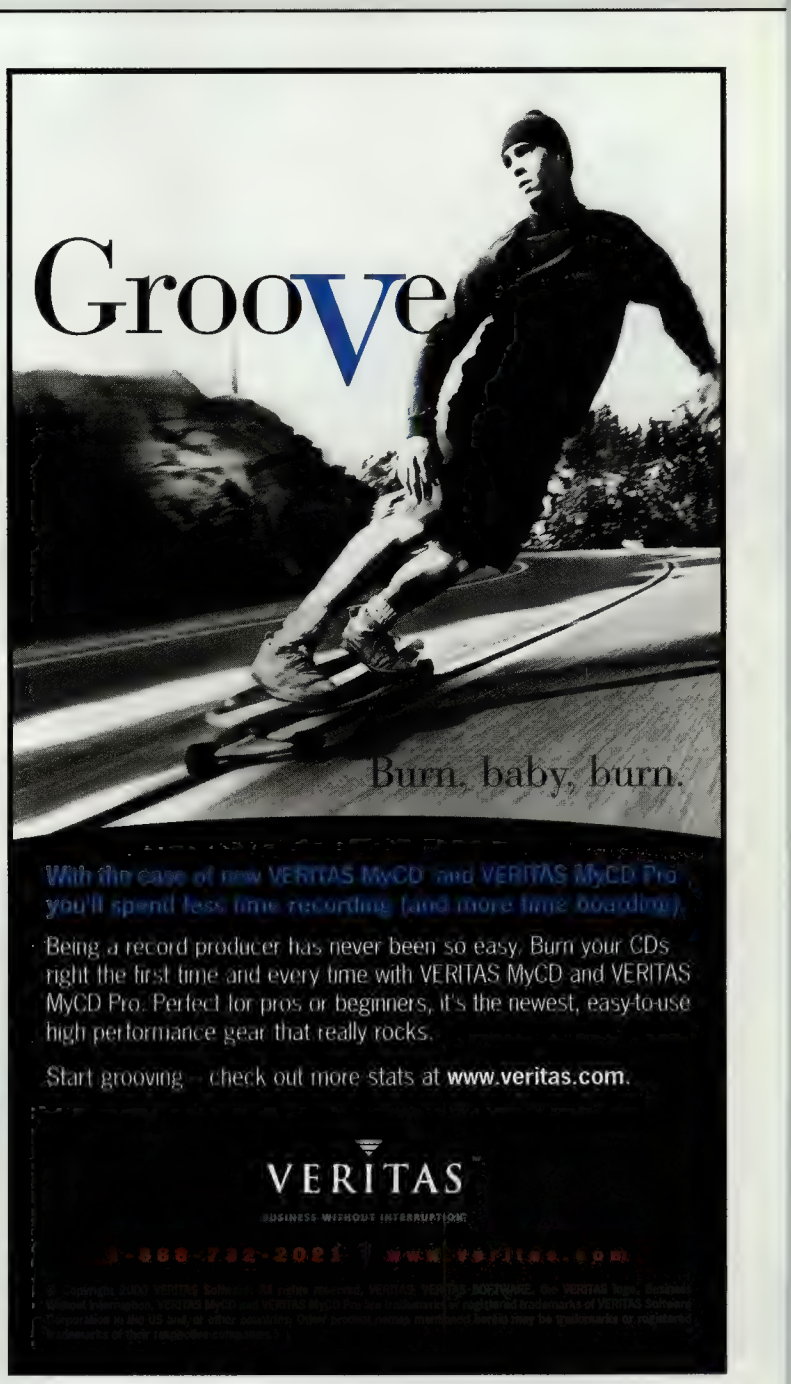
There's no rest for the wicked or the righteous, so once you are back in the cemetery use the uzi and lightning sword to dispatch the Happy Masks and Ghosts. Gather the ammo and items from around the cemetery before moving on to the temple of water. Once inside, you'll have to bake a Harvester again, and then turn the left and then right crank to lower the elevator. This level is full of powerful enemies, but they can all be killed quickly with the right weapon. Use flamethrowers on Harvesters, chainguns on Flesh Binders, and a lightning sword combo on the Grawlix. At the end of the level, climb into the blue beam of light to continue to the next temple.

The Sanctity of Blood

Another temple means another return to the cemetery. Kill the Binders here, stock up on water and ammo for a little piece of mind, and then move on to the temple of blood. Inside, turn around to gather some water and ammo. Run through the spikes and then chaingun the Binders until you get to the jumping platforms. The two glowing pixies will guide you to the safe platforms and your final showdown with two Harvesters. Use your flamethrowers and firesword to toast the Harvesters and move on.

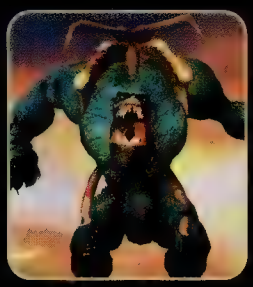
The Bridge of Reason and Lord Tyler

The final trip to the cemetery means another battle with a Harvester. Fight him in a pool to keep your water at 50 percent. The Bridge of Reason is relatively short and features more Harvesters and Binders. Past them lies the Heart of the We and the final boss. To end Lord Tyler's reign in blood, you'll need to use three weapons: the rocket launcher, the soul-sucker, and Tyler's sword of light. Start by blasting him with rockets. Soon he will go down on his knees to heal himself. Switch to the soul-sucker, then run up to him and use it while he is kneeling. Repeat this until you blow his arm off. Grab the sword of light during the battle and keep blasting away at Tyler. Finally, when he has no life left on his health bar, switch to the sword of light, run toward him, jump, and deliver the final coup de grâce. There, now that wasn't so hard, was it? PCG



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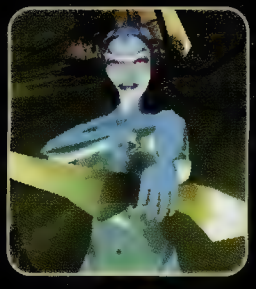
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Sanity: Aiken's Artifact

For those of you who are having trouble with this fun little action-adventure game, here's a rundown on your primary goals for each Chapter. It doesn't cover every single obstacle you'll face while playing through the game, but it will get you past the stickier points.



To kill Starr's showgirls, use Psionic Push to shove them into the middle of the room.

CHAPTER ONE

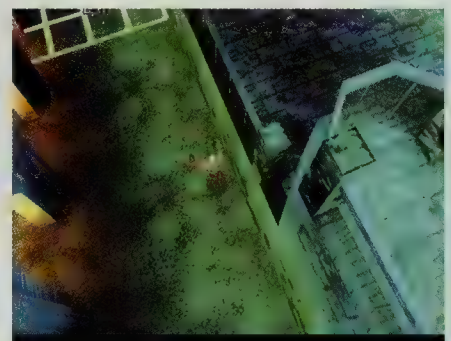
Pharaoh Village Trailer Park, The Psychic Line, Priscilla Divine

At the trailer park, enter the manager's office via the unlocked rear door and grab the key he drops when he finds you. Open the locked shed and blow up the propane tank — when the car hits the gate and the gate goes down, head inside by showing your badge to the security guard. Use the Mind's Eye Talent to learn the password. Pull your gun on the receptionist to enter. To get past the electrical beams, stand back and get a running start the moment the front beams meet. Use the code 2143 to shut down the power. Run from office to office (use Mind's Eye if needed); at the fourth one, return and retrieve the bolt cutters from the technician to access the uplink computer and get the access codes to enter Priscilla Divine's inner sanctum. Destroy Divine's minions then move in close and wait for her shield to drop. Be patient — she regenerates several times.

CHAPTER TWO

DNPC Headquarters, Grand Theater, Deathtrap, Adrian Starr

Don't freak out when the test computer goes wacky — it's just a tutorial to show you how to deal with several enemies at once. When you're finished, head downstairs and use Star Blast to free the cop trapped by a beam and get an access card.

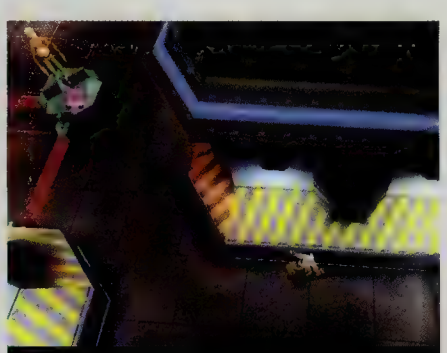


You can use the Binary Grid to damage several zombies with just one attack.

To stop the breakout, dash up the stairs in the detention block and use Star Shower or Eyes of Ra. To exit, hit the lever and use Haste to reach the doors in time. The Psionic Push that Bobby gives you also keeps Abel at bay on the rooftop until reinforcements arrive.

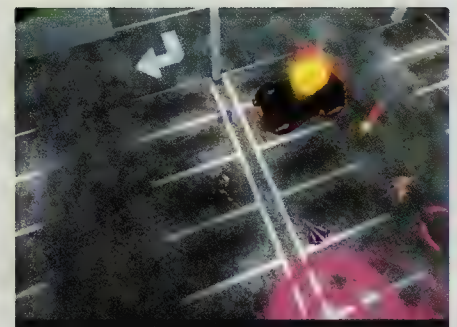
In town, talk to everyone (and read their minds, too) for clues. Arrange the boxes in the fenced area and push one into the force field to get the Reveal Talent. Go to the voodoo shop, talk to the clerk, then head to the church. Knock down only the men's tombstones to get the church key. Use Reveal to see the fifth bell (the bell-player on the street tells you the notes) and play the song, then use Haste to reach the skull in time. Take the skull to the voodoo guy and fight Golgotham's guards. You'll soon get the Levitate Talent, which can take you into the rear entrance of the theater. Use the tips a guy on the street gave you to get the deck of magic cards (shuffle six, re-shuffle once), then find the Deathtrap entrance. Fight Adrian Starr's showgirls, and then examine the Deathtrap entrance. Go to the bathroom and exchange the cards for the bolt cutter and enter the Deathtrap.

Pull your gun on the attendant and fight two dancing girls. Use Eyes of Ra and Fireball to shoot the four round targets from safety and stop the wheel and blades. Finding the extra three cards to get the key to the cage is fairly simple: push the Ace box into the buzzsaw, levitate to get past the blades, and use timing to follow the balls past the blades. To defeat the showgirls, remember you can push them into the billowing stars in the middle of the room.

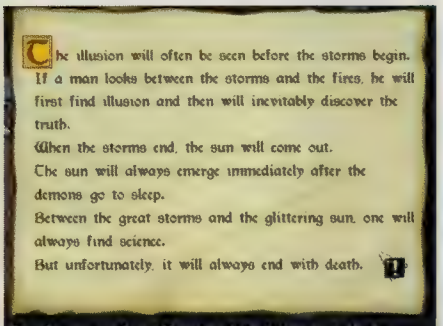


Use Shield of Lesser Reflect to bounce these guards' laser fire back at them — but be careful.

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When Golgotham appears in the parking lot, use Haste to skirt near the guards he summons.



Don't worry about figuring this thing out: Just close the curtains in the order we list below.



This is the shape of the unlit squares you need in order to solve Krebspawn's puzzle.

Shoot the tigers to save the trainer, then exit out to the show. If you've paid attention you'll answer all the questions (they're easy). Shoot the four moving stars to activate the pendulums and shatter Adrian's booth, then use Shield of Lesser Reflect to return his attacks.

CHAPTER THREE

Aiken Pharmaceuticals, Aiken Research Level, Joan Aiken

Defeat Golgotham's guards by using Haste to run and duck in between them — they'll wind up shooting each other until one or two are left. Enter the plant and get the guy's clothes in the bathroom. Endure the guided tour and head into the restricted area. Do all the errand-boy assignments and grab the Fire Wall Talent when the workers evacuate, then return the beaker to gain entrance to the lower level. Pull your gun on the receptionist to get the code for the records room (4995) and an access card. Read all the data to get the code for the Children of Tomorrow room (yellow, blue, red, white, green) and grab the access card. Hit the levers in the Training Maze and lead Anthony out, then enter Bay 2 via a hidden door (to the right as you face Bay 1). Shoot the barrier, levitate across the maze, and shoot another barrier to get the Suicide Drone Talent.

Enter the Children of Tomorrow area and retrieve Jessica's doll using Reveal. The solution to Nathan's puzzle is to put the C block on the C square using Psionic Push; push blocks into the blue lights to re-set them to their original position (touch the blue lights yourself!). Take Anthony to the Test Chamber to stand on the plate while you use Telekinesis (from Jessica) to flip the switch in the other room — this gives you Invisibility. Pull your badge on the guards at the Detention Center to head inside and give Jarred the pendant, but be ready to enter his cell quickly and fight from a safe position when the cell doors open. Destroy the Suicide Drone generators with an overhead-attack Talent (Rain of Swords, for example), then flip the switch and use Haste to reach the door in time (dodge the lights!).

Return to Aiken's office and push the bookcase; grab the health and sanity behind the receptionist's desk before going downstairs. Step on the pressure plate and use Invisibility to enter Aiken's secret lab. Kill all Suicide Drones, then use a combo of Star Blast and Shield of Lesser Reflect to take out the containers. Shoot the "Flammable" container to lure away the guards. Kill all of Aiken's Anubis guards then quickly shoot at the Brain Circuit (repeat as necessary). Defeating Aiken is time consuming, but not tough. Hit the switch in the hallway to open two doors and gain several Talents.

CHAPTER FOUR

Krebspawn's House, Catacombs, Elijah Krebspawn

Tell the butler you want to talk to Ellard about Krebspawn. To solve the paintings puzzle, close the curtains in this order: fire, illusion, truth, storm, science, demons, sun, death. To free the prisoner in the catacombs, pull the third, first, fourth, and second switches (from left to right). Just head out the various exits to find the stones; in the final big battle in the Catacombs, use Shield of Lesser Reflect.

The solution to the first puzzle is to push both pieces onto the appropriate squares (much the same as Nathan's puzzle); re-set the other pieces as needed by pushing them off the edge. To complete the second puzzle, you'll need to create a cross of unlit squares in the middle of the puzzle then shoot the middle one to light them without unlighting any other squares. The final battle with Krebspawn is a doozy — Shield of Lesser Reflect is helpful, but all we can really say here is good luck! (Use Levitate at the corners to retrieve sanity from time to time.)

CHAPTER FIVE

Dead City, Waterfront, The Bone Priest

Get the first-aid kit for the wounded cop, then tell the cops near the doorway "Chief Royce" in exchange for the elevator key. Levitate from the bridge to the rooftops and down onto the crates. When fighting

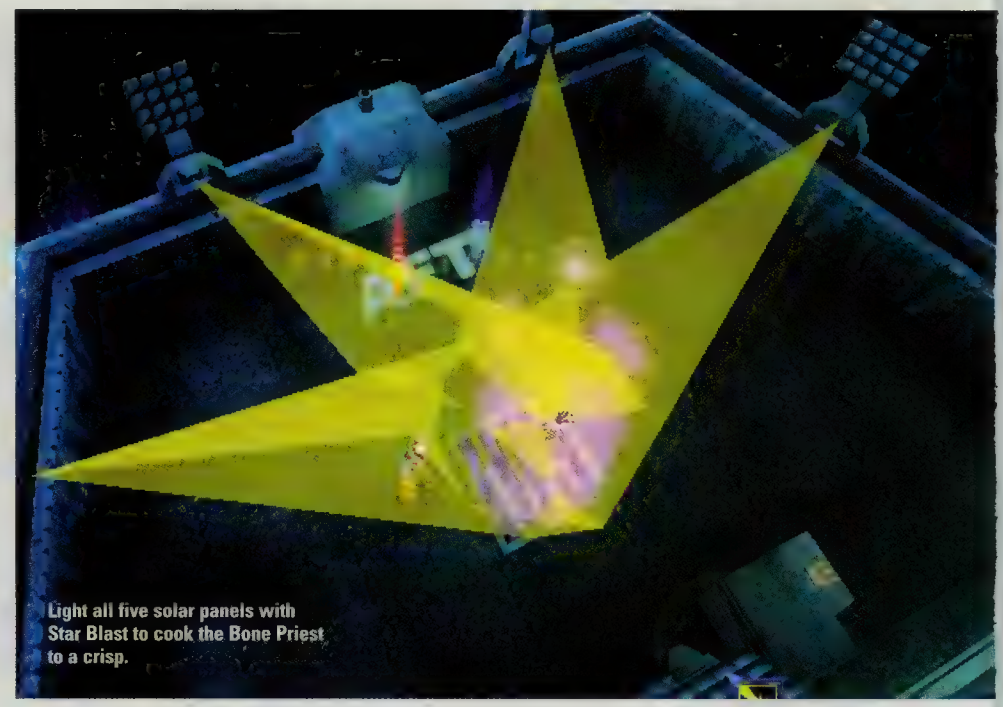


To get one of the stones for the pentagram, you'll need to open up the "jail cells" containing demons in order to erect walkways between spinning platforms. Flip any lever you see!

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the red zombies, use Shield Break to destroy their protection and kill them faster. Use Haste and Sphere of the Demon in battles with the Bone Priest's guards, and always blow up the zombie regenerators (four posts that form a square). Talk to the guy in the shack three times to make the zombie blow up the gate. Cross the bridge and talk to the maintenance man. To get his key, Levitate from stone to stone to the power station and use 1522 to access the valves. Raise the metal grate, lower the block, turn on the water, then raise the block with the key on it.

To lower the bridge for Strassbourgh, use Telekinesis to flip the lever and call the platform. After Strassbourgh's death, you'll need the fuse from the office to operate the platform you used earlier. You'll want to switch to the Lightning Bolt as your primary attack Talent as soon as you get it — it kills zombies very quickly. Destroying the Bone Priest on his ship is easy: use Star Blast or Star Show to light all five solar panels simultaneously. Repeat as necessary until he's finished.



Light all five solar panels with Star Blast to cook the Bone Priest to a crisp.

CHAPTER SIX

Power Station, Meat Plant, Golgotham

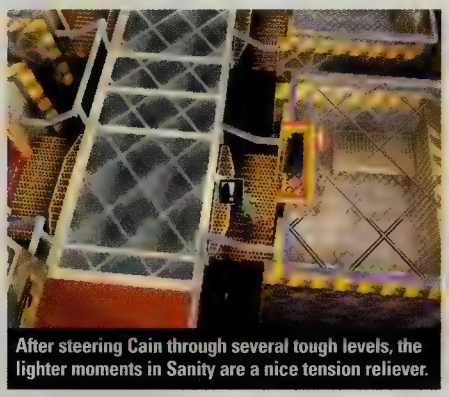
Golgotham's guards are back. So, once again, weave among them using Haste to make them kill each other. As Bobby, use Reveal to see the platforms and cross the water. Push the sliding doors to access pressure plates that turn off the force fields blocking your path, then return to the very first sliding door you saw and push it forward to unlock a new area. In the next room, Reveal shows floating platforms; hop on one and repeat. Wave of Repulsion will protect you from the crushing walls, allowing you to reach the lever. Run across the rollers to reach the fan room; there, flip the switches to stop the blades so they form a continuous path (you can re-try if you goof it). Use Telekinesis to flip the lever and reach Cain.

Staying alive against Abel is challenging, but this combo works: activate Shield of Truth, then stand near the steam vents and push Abel several times. When he's a good distance away, use Telekinesis on the vent levers — if you time it correctly, he'll run right through the steam. You'll have to do this a lot, so be patient. When Cain asks you to open the door, use the Wave of Repulsion.

Head through the barn to find Blaine. Inside the meat plant, use Electrical Storm Glyph, if possible, on the Butcher Bulls — it uses less sanity and does as much damage as the Lightning Bolt. When you reach the T-shaped hallway, step on the pressure plate and use Haste to run left (dodge the lights!). To keep the heart rolling through the processor, step on the appropriate pressure plate (or use Telekinesis) a few seconds before the heart reaches the next bridge-like section. Timing is critical because the bridge sections only stay closed a few seconds. Keep advancing until you find a key in a small closet, then step on a pressure plate (another Bull appears) and head back to the T-shaped hallway. Use the same procedure as before but this time go right. Reveal exposes the narrow walkway; move in a counter-clockwise direction until you reach the other side (there's also an Imprison Glyph to be found if you first explore to the right).

Fight your way through the various pens containing Butcher Bulls; Invisibility buys you some time at the start of each battle. When you finally exit, you'll be faced with Golgotham. The goal here is similar to when you fought Aiken. Kill all the creatures of a Totem he summons, then quickly run and shoot the brain representing that Totem while its force field is down. Repeat the process for all brains, then get ready for the showdown with Golgotham. To defeat him, study his pattern of attack. First he'll attack with his right hand, then his left hand; from the safe side, fire lightning bolts at his heart. When he goes down and arises somewhere else, he'll launch attacks that can't be dodged, so use the Shield of Truth and try to shoot his heart as quickly as possible. You'll have to repeat this process several times, but it can be done. When he's defeated, Levitate over to Bobby and Ted and finish the Chapter.

PCG



After steering Cain through several tough levels, the lighter moments in Sanity are a nice tension reliever.



The Reveal Talent exposes the floating platforms. Study the pattern to see how to get across to the exit.



You'll need good timing to get through these beams. A running start will help.

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Half-Life: Opposing Force CTF

The goal is simple: capture the opposing team's flag and return it to the capture point in home base. This guide will introduce you to the eight *Opposing Force Capture the Flag* maps, two of which are on *The PC Gamer CD* this month exclusively! Prepare yourself for this team-based battle with tips from the developers.



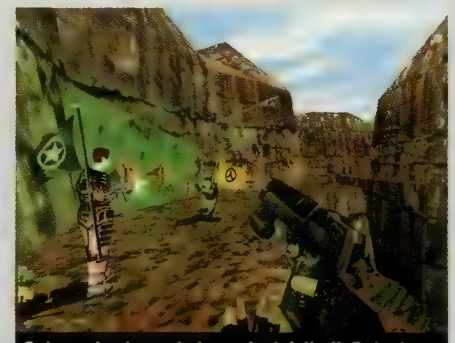
Using the grappling hook takes practice, but gives a vital strategic advantage when moving the flag.

BLACK MESA BIODOMES

The vertical landscape of Biodomes rewards the strategic-minded player more than any other *OpFor CTF* map. With each team's flag overlooking a biodome and resting beneath an observation tower, there are multiple methods of attack and defense. The favorable point of control, however, is the long hall connecting each team's observation tower. The hall is the most effective route for flag running, and gives your team a bird's-eye view of both biodomes due to its elevation. When nearing the enemy biodome, be ready to use the barnacle grappling hook when entering the flag room or returning to the observation tower for a quick escape. Although controlling the central hallway is a great way to run flags, keep your opponents on their toes by making use of the Biodome's various routes. A favorable strategy in a level of this complexity is to avoid predictable behavior.

CHASM

Chasm's open nature creates long-ranged battles among the cliffs. Although there are a few effective roundabout ways of travel between flag bases, devoting a portion of your team to central control of the cliff region pays off. A team of infantry is better organized in the open space and makes for a strong offensive when arriving at the enemy's front door. When overwhelmed by snipers on the top level, use the chasm's depth to your advantage. The lowest cliff provides a way to sneak by the action. If you seek an alternate entrance to the enemy flag room, you have many options. Use the barnacle grappling hook to enter through one of the two windows near the base's front, or take the cave tunnels for a back-door approach. When defending your flag room in Chasm, simply keep an eye on the flag. If an enemy carries your flag out of the room, you'll have to know which route he took in order to stop him. For a deadly defense, try waiting in the base's rafters with satchels or AR grenades.



Quite a simple tactic here: don't fall off. Or look over the edge — you may get dizzy.

CRASH SITE

Crash Site's layout puts the fate of your team in its ability to work together by attacking and defending in groups. Although the underground sewers provide an alternate route of travel between bases, the ground surrounding the crashed osprey remains a bottleneck for much of this level's combat. With such a centralized point of control, raw combat tactics will shine. Crash Site's linear level flow requires a soccer mentality. Flag defenders are full-backs, flag carriers are forwards, and those that seek control of the bottleneck are half-backs. Much like soccer itself, halfbacks do much of the grunt work. Having your team's front line at the level's center makes scoring that much easier for you, and that much harder for your opponents. For a defensive strategy on this level, try waiting



This is where the bulk of the fighting takes place. Use cover and have heavies ready to spray lead.

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Keep your mortar operator defended as bombarding the enemy with shells is the best way to keep them down.

outside your base rather than sitting on the flag. Keep an eye on the nearby sewer as well as the front tunnel entrance. From here, you can get a jump on enemy attackers and send an early warning to your teammates that the flag is in jeopardy.

GUNYARD

Gunyard's upper catwalks beg for a sniper war, but due to the low vision of the night setting, the real battle is down below. The central building holds a significant amount of the level's firepower, and is reasonably defendable. Your team should devote some time to controlling this area, or could opt for the more advanced strategy of rotating the guard duty. The defender of the building can stock up on items until his replacement arrives, which is the most effective way to keep a steady stream of well armed teammates attacking the enemy. When approaching the flag room, your best method of entry is through the garage entrance and up the stairway on the right. This will get you closest to the flag before you are spotted. When your route of attack becomes too predictable, try crossing the Gunyard on the catwalks and surprising the enemy team at their spawn position.

MORTAR

With a direct line of sight between the opposing bases of Mortar, there is no doubt what route of attack is the quickest. What could possibly stop your team from choosing this central path? Artillery shells the size of your head. If the enemy makes good use of their mortar, charging the field may bring your team more carnage than flag captures. Use the warehouses as safe havens to stock up on health and ammunition before nearing the enemy base. If you can't stay away from the thrill of heavy combat, though, there are two ways to give yourself enough boost to cross the open sands with haste. The jump-pack power-up will keep you mobile and in the air. If you can't get your hands on this coveted item, the SAW is also an effective way to give your jumps that extra distance. Face away from the direction you want to travel and let her rip. Once you get some speed, start jumping backwards. If you hit the central hill of Mortar just right, your touch down will land you at the enemy's doorstep.

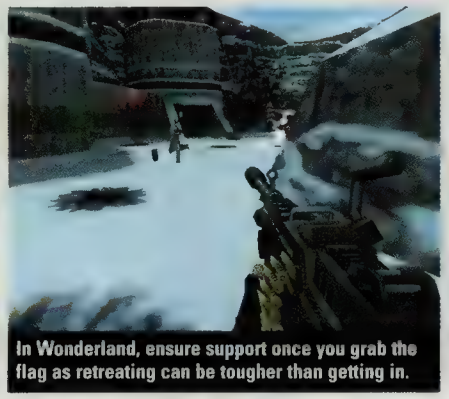
THE WONDERLAND

The Wonderland's low-scoring behavior requires that your team stay focused in order to see a flag capture. Although the flag sits at the front of your base, an organized defense can keep the enemy at bay without much strain. Playing offense in this level is a challenging task, which is only rewarded through persistence. There are several paths to the enemy flag, so change your route of travel each time you make a run for it. Although the quickest way is to climb the boxes at the front of the base, your best bet to reach the flag is through stealth. Take the water entrance or the underground tunnel to the enemy base, hopefully reaching the flag before you are spotted. This might give you enough lead time to lose yourself in the snowy terrain before the opposing team overwhelms you.

PCG



That flag is going to get tattered very quickly unless you have plenty of defensive support.



In Wonderland, ensure support once you grab the flag as retreating can be tougher than getting in.

XENDANCE AND REPENTAGRAM X2 *PC GAMER CD* EXCLUSIVE!

Included with the standard release of *Half-Life: Opposing Force CTF* are two new levels found exclusively on this *PC Gamer CD*! Xendance and Repentagram x2 offer new styles of play that promise to make your team multiplayer experience that much more gratifying. Try them out using these strategies.

'HITMAN: CODENAME 47' casts you as a hired assassin and chronicles your progress through a series of contracts. Includes some 27 levels that cover five actual hits, as well as the preparations necessary to make those hits - accumulating equipment, information, and the like. Most missions are comprised of about 80% planning and 20% action.



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'STARSHIP TROOPERS' puts you in battle armor in the middle of a 3D game played from a chase perspective. While in the command ship, you move around without armor. You can eventually gain control over your entire squad if you wish. Spaceship interiors, bug tunnels, buildings, wide open landscapes, & swarms of bugs attacking simultaneously are all a part of the game.



Microprose (Action) Release: 10/00 PC CD **$38.95**

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'SUDDEN STRIKE' is a real-time strategy and tactical simulation game. Set in WWII, with Russian, German, French, American & British missions focusing on tactical fighting. Up to 1,000 units per scenario, giant maps, realistic gun simulations complete with "real" explosions, units gain experience and make it from one mission to the next, multi player mode: up to 12 players and 4 teams.

Eidos (Strategy)
$39.95 **Release: 11/00**
PC CD

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Sierra (Roleplaying)
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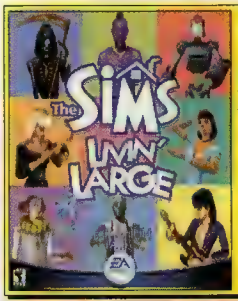
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PC CD



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EA (Strategy)
$29.95 **Release: 9/00**
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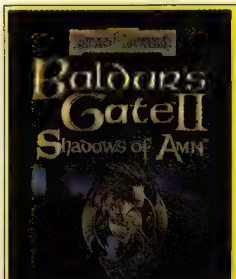
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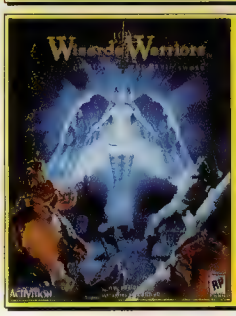
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Activision (Roleplaying)
$39.95 **Release: 10/00**
PC CD

LETTERS

Welcome to the letters page, your place to tell the world what's on your mind in the realm of PC gaming. Got something to say? Anything? Send it to *letters@pcgamer.com*.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! Write to us at: PC Gamer Letters, Imagine Media, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005, or E-mail us at: *letters@pcgamer.com*.



Don't worry when you see the name Havas on your copy of *Diablo II*; it's still created by the good Blizzard folks.

NOT EVERYTHING FRENCH IS BAD

The company responsible for creating *Diablo II* is Blizzard Entertainment, right? If so, why does the ad index in the back of the magazine list it as Havas Interactive? Who are these crazy "Havas" people and what have they done to Blizzard? Did I miss a name change somewhere along the road?

— Yadranka Perkov, via the Internet

Don't worry, Yadranka, you didn't really miss much at all. Blizzard Entertainment is a division of a larger French company that goes by the name of Havas Interactive. In this relationship, Blizzard is the developer of games (i.e. they make them) and Havas is the publisher (i.e. they're the company that pays Blizzard to make the games, and then in turn, gets those games out to stores).

THE APOCALYPSE DIDN'T HAPPEN IN JANUARY, 2000

Do you know whether or not the game *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* will ever be released? I have been looking in stores and on the 'net for info, but I can't seem to find one scrap of information about it being abandoned or published.

— Ben Torfe, via the Internet

Well, originally, Werewolf *was to be published by ASC Games, Ben. ASC bit the big one and* Werewolf*'s developers (DreamForge Intertainment) are shopping it around to find a new publisher. If and when that happens, we'll be sure to let you know about it in* PC Gamer.



Werewolf: The Apocalypse is looking for a publisher.



If you're an RTS fan, *Shogun* is worth your time.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

I want to thank all those responsible for creating *PC Gamer* for re-introducing me to gaming on the PC. As a child (I'm 20 now) I was introduced to PC games by a friend of the family who brought over an early Sierra game called *Black Cauldron*. Right away, I was hooked. After that, I spent many hours with games like *Hero Quest* and went gaga over *WarCraft*, *WarCraft II*, and *StarCraft*. For the better part of two years, however, I've done very little gaming.

Then, two months ago, an issue of *PC Gamer* inexplicably showed up in my mailbox. I must admit to being captivated. I enjoyed its wit and humor and attention to detail. The reviews also hit the spot, and the features and opinion columns were informative and entertaining. As an RTS fan, your review of *Shogun: Total War* caught my eye, and as a result, I purchased a copy. The only problem I'm facing now is that my computer has been in the shop for a month, and I was only able to play *Shogun* twice before it went in! But don't worry! Even without my PC, I will continue to rely on your magazine for all my gaming news in anticipation of its healthy return.

— Morgan Sisk, via the Internet

Thank you so much, Morgan! Your letter is exactly the sort of thing that helps us get out of bed and come into work in the morning! Of course, so do all the new games we get to play. We're all hoping that your computer comes out of the shop in perfect condition so you can get back into gaming.

FROM A MR. SANS BITTERNESS

Just to let you know (and this is sans bitterness, trust me), I'm not going to get another subscription to your magazine. I'm no longer a big fan of the style (e.g. the pic of "Vede" on your web site). It just no longer seems quite as cut and dry as it used to be. Frankly, I find your staff's personalities showing up too much for my taste. Others might like it, but if your subscribers are leaving in droves and you can't figure out why, this new style might be the reason.

— Name Withheld, via the Internet

www.DailyRadar.com

COCONUT QUANDARIES

I tried to visit the Coconut Monkey web site today (*www.coconutmonkey.com*) but was unable to. All I got for my effort was a "Page Cannot be Located" message. Has the site been removed? If so, that would be unfortunate because last spring my brother and I whipped up a container full of the "Coconut Monkey" drink recipe that we found on CM's web site. I have been telling all my friends how amazing it is ever since, but I just recently lost the piece of paper that had the recipe on it, so I've been unable to mix another batch for them. Do you happen to have the recipe handy?

Thanks for the help, and please remind Coconut Monkey that even though *Gravy Trader* is several years late at this point, he should not rush to get it out the door. Blizzard never rushes its games, and they always turn out quite well because of it. Tell him to follow Blizzard's lead and wait until everything is perfect — thus ensuring its place in history as one of the greatest games of all time.

— **Rob Fox,** via the Internet

Coconut Monkey responds: *Well, well, well! Thank you ever so much for the kind words! You want me to tell you how to make my top-secret "Coconut Monkey" cocktail, huh? I'd thank you to stay out of my affairs! I'm terribly busy getting* Gravy Trader *ready for a winter 2013 release! I don't have time for this sort of nonsense (other sorts of nonsense — yes, perhaps I could make some time — but definitely not for this sort). Plus, I'm drunk like a skunk! I can't even see my hands! Wait a second... Great googa-mallo, I don't have any hands! Oh my goodness — or feet! Oh, cruel, cruel world! Damn my coconut ancestry! If grandfather had only been sober enough to find a real monkey, things would have been so very different for me...*

Senior Ass. Editor, Greg Vederman chimes in here, folks. CM has just thrown himself off of a table and is rolling down the hall toward the entrance to his secret underground lair as we speak. You'll have to excuse him — he's been under a lot of pressure lately. Anyway, CM was probably just off on some raging bender the day you tried to log on to his web site because it's still up and running strong. That said, I'll gladly go ahead and supply you with the recipe you asked about! (Remember, people, you must be 21 years or older to buy alcohol.)

The Coconut Monkey

- 1 part pineapple juice
- 1 part orange juice
- 1 part Blue Curacao
- 1 part Amaretto
- 1 part Soda/Tonic
- 1 part Coconut Milk
- 2 parts Rum (White)
- 2 parts Absolut
- 1 part Tequila
- 1 part Gin
- 1 part Jim Beam
- 1 part Midori



Do you want to shoot a poor, defenseless, little Coconut Monkey? In *Gravy Trader*, you can.

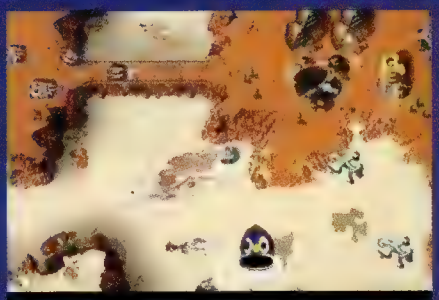
I have a major question for CM: What the heck type of a game is *Gravy Trader* going to be? Is it an RPG or an action game? Maybe a strategy or adventure?

— **Cody,** via the Internet

Well, after that last letter, we know better than to disturb CM for such information right at the moment. Here's his latest .plan file update, which should shed very little light on the subject (along with a couple of screenshots — just to confuse matters further):

"I receive many E-mails each and every day asking about Gravy Trader, *which has been in development for 19 years. Truly this game will be the greatest masterpiece of all-time, sell ten million copies, and make me tons of money. I will begin actual work on it soon, and it will be done when I become bored with it or when my gambling habit finally catches up to me.*

— Coconut Monkey



***Gravy Trader* will incorporate an RTS mode.**

Why wouldn't we believe that you are who you say you are, Mr. Sans Bitterness? You think we're a bunch of idiots or something? We're really sorry you feel the way that you do, but to be honest, the new style ("sans" the picture of Vederman — we have to hand it to you on that one) seems to be a big hit. These things tend to go a couple of different ways. It can be like the "Coke" to "New Coke" transition, where everyone uniformly dislikes the new style and so the old style comes back stronger than ever. Or, conversely, it can be like the transition from VHS to DVD, where most people are immediately drawn to the new format. This latter scenario seems to be the way most of our readers feel when it comes to PC Gamer*'s evolving style, but we do appreciate your comments about the magazine!*

"WORST REVIEW EVERRRR!" (SAID IN "THE SIMPSONS" "COMIC BOOK GUY" VOICE)

Your magazine is putting out false information about the minimum hardware requirements for *Deus Ex*. Normally I wouldn't care about such a thing, but this error happened to effect me personally. I went to the store to buy a copy of *Deus Ex* based on your recommendation, but when I got there the box said that a 3D accelerator was required to play — unlike your review, which mentioned nothing of the sort. I thought the information on the box might be incorrect, so I went home and checked your web site and it said the same thing as your magazine — that only an SVGA card was required to play the game. But then, when I headed over to Eidos' web site, it confirmed that a 3D card was required to play. I think that you should verify the information that you print a bit better in the future so that gamers such as myself aren't misled.

— **Austin Day,** via the Internet

Sorry about that, Austin. It looks like we're to blame for a misprint. The review in question says that a "DirectX card" is required, when it should have said that a "Direct3D card" is required. We sincerely apologize for the error and are happy to report that the reviewer in question has been beaten to within an inch of his sorry, pointless life.

PCG

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Eidos Interactive	Commandos 2	205	132
Eidos Interactive	Project IGI	18-19	944
Eidos Interactive	Hitman	82-83	190
Eidos Interactive	Timeline	190	980
Electronic Arts	Alice	80-81	—
Electronic Arts	Madden 2001	26-27	182
Electronic Arts	www.ea.com	237	987
Electronics Boutique	Catalog	145-150	10
Electronics Boutique	EB World	95, 97, 99, 101	188
Falcon Northwest	Custom Gaming PC	198	140
firstlook.com	www.firstlook.com	25	955
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Fox Interactive	No One Lives Forever	44-45	962
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Havas / Sierra Studios	Ground Control	122-125	99
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Interact PC Line	Interact PC Line	194	353
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Interplay Productions	Virtual Pool 3	56	964
Interplay Productions	Star Trek - New Worlds	142	331
Interplay Productions	Sacrifice	186-187	963
Interplay Productions	Giants: Citizens Kabuto	224-225	985
Interplay Productions	Baldur's Gate 2	218-219	345
Interplay Productions	Icewind Dale	116	270
Interplay Productions	Starfleet Command	10-11	182
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Microsoft	Midtown Madness	89	—
Microsoft	Metal Gear Solid	32	—
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Microsoft	Sidewinder - Force Feedback 2	166	—
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Sony Online Entertainment	Everquest: Scars	58	989
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TalonSoft	Devil Inside	76	906
THQ Inc.	Evil Dead	92-93	768
Total Games	Total Games	222	—
Univ. of Advancing Computer Techn.	Distance Education	237	880
Veritas Software	Music Software	223	—
Westwood Studios	Red Alert 2	62-67	842
XiCat	X-Plane	17	988

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Super7™

	Part Number	Chip Set	L2 Cache (KB)	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	72-pin SIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Integrated Audio	Integrated Controller	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Format	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/AMD-K6®-2/500	w/AMD-K6-2/550	w/Intel® Pentium® MMX™ 233MHz
EPoX EP-MVP3C2	MB5406	VIA Apollo MVP3	512	384	3		Award		UltraDMA/66	4	2	1	Baby AT	2 Yrs.	$85	$145	$173	$145
EPoX EP-MVP3G5	MB5405	VIA Apollo MVP3	2048	384	3		Award		UltraDMA/66	5	2	1	ATX	2 Yrs.	$110	$170	$198	$170
FIC VA-503+	MB5211	VIA Apollo MVP3	1024	512	2	4	Award			3	3	1	Baby AT	1 Yr.	$76	$136	$164	$136
Pine VA7-AV	MB5300	VIA Apollo MVP4	512	768	3		Award	AC-97	UltraDMA/66	5	2		ATX	3 Yrs	$93	$153	$181	$153
Tyan S1590S Trinity 100AT	MB5006	VIA Apollo MVP3	1024	384	3	2	Award			4	4	1	Mini AT	3 Yrs	$99	$159	$187	$159

Slot A

	Part Number	Chip Set	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Bus Frequency	Integrated Controller	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Format	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/AMD Athlon™ 600MHz	w/AMD Athlon 650MHz	w/AMD Athlon 800MHz	w/AMD Athlon 850MHz	w/AMD Athlon 1000MHz	w/AMD Athlon 1100MHz
ABIT KA7-100	MB7502	VIA Apollo KX133	2048	4	Award	200/133	UltraDMA/100	6	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$189	$394	$414	$479	$524	$629	$769
Asus K7V	MB7703	VIA Apollo KX133	1536	3	Award	200/133	UltraDMA/66	5		1	ATX	1 Yr	$155	$360	$380	$445	$490	$595	$735
EPoX EP-7KXA	MB7850	VIA Apollo KX133	768	3	Award	200/133	UltraDMA/66	5	1	1	ATX	2 Yrs.	$120	$325	$345	$410	$455	$560	$700
Shuttle AI61	MB7901	AMD-750	768	3	Award	100	UltraDMA/66	5		1	MicroATX	1 Yr	$93	$298	$318	$383	$428	$533	$673
Tyan S2380 Trinity K7	MB7000	VIA Apollo KX133	768	3	Award	200/133	UltraDMA/66	6	1	1	ATX	3 Yrs	$121	$326	$346	$411	$456	$561	$701



Socket A

	Part Number	Chip Set	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Bus Frequency	Integrated Controller	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Format	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/AMD Duron™ 600MHz	w/AMD Duron 650MHz	w/AMD Duron 700MHz	w/AMD Duron 750MHz	w/AMD Athlon™ 800MHz with Enhanced Cache	w/AMD Athlon 850MHz with Enhanced Cache	w/AMD Athlon 900MHz with Enhanced Cache	w/AMD Athlon 950MHz with Enhanced Cache	w/AMD Athlon 1000MHz with Enhanced Cache	w/AMD Athlon 1100MHz with Enhanced Cache
ABIT KT7	MB7503	VIA Apollo KT133	1536	3	Award	200/133	UltraDMA/66	6	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$173	$244	$258	$273	$303	$378	$398	$463	$508	$613	$753
ABIT KT7-RAID	MB7504	VIA Apollo KT133	1536	3	Award	200/133	DMA/100 RAID	6	1	1	ATX	1 Yr	$199	$270	$284	$299	$329	$404	$424	$489	$534	$639	$779
ASUS A7V	MB7704	VIA Apollo KT133	1536	3	Award	200/133	UltraDMA/100	5		1	ATX	1 Yr	$175	$246	$260	$275	$305	$380	$400	$465	$510	$615	$755
EPoX EP-8KTA	MB7851	VIA Apollo KT133	768	3	Award	200/133	UltraDMA/66	6	1	1	ATX	2 Yr.	$127	$198	$212	$227	$257	$332	$352	$417	$462	$567	$707
FIC AZ11	MB7402	VIA Apollo KT133	1536	3	Award	200/133	UltraDMA/66	5		1	ATX	1 Yr.	$128	$199	$213	$228	$258	$333	$353	$418	$463	$568	$708
Microstar K7T Pro	MB7203	VIA Apollo KT133	1536	3	Award	200/133	UltraDMA/66	5		1	ATX	1 Yr.	$147	$218	$232	$247	$277	$352	$372	$437	$482	$587	$727
Tyan S2390 Trinity KT	MB7001	VIA Apollo KT133	1536	3	Award	200/133	UltraDMA/66	6	1	1	ATX	3 Yr.	$147	$218	$232	$247	$277	$352	$372	$437	$482	$587	$727

Slot 1

	Part Number	Chip Set	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	168-pin RIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Integrated Audio	Integrated Controller	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Formaw	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/Intel® Pentium III® 667 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 733 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 800/EB 256K OD 100/133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 850 256K OD 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 933 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 1000 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Dual Intel Pentium III 800 256K OD 100MHz FSB	w/Dual Intel Pentium III 850 256K OD 100MHz FSB
ABIT BE6-II	MB6508	Intel 440BX	768	3		Award		UltraDMA/66	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$140	N/A	N/A	$380	$440	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ABIT BX133-RAID	MB6513	Intel 440BX	768	3		Award		DMA/100 RAID	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$169	N/A	N/A	$409	$469	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ABIT VT6X4	MB6510	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3		Award	AC-97	UltraDMA/66	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	$103	$308	$343	$343	$403	$533	$678	N/A	N/A
ASUS P2B-DS (Dual)	MB6707	Intel 440BX	1024	4		Award			4	2	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$509	N/A	N/A	$749	$809	N/A	N/A	$989	$1109
ASUS P3B-F	MB6720	Intel 440BX	1024	4		Award			6	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$145	N/A	N/A	$385	$445	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ASUS P3V4X	MB6723	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	1024	4		Award		UltraDMA/66	6	1	1	ATX	1 Yr	$133	$338	$373	$373	$433	$563	$708	N/A	N/A
Intel L440GX+ (Dual)	MB6917	Intel 440GX	2048	4		Intel/Phoenix		Adaptec 2-Ch U2W	6	1		ATX	3 Yrs.	$544	N/A	N/A	$784	$844	N/A	N/A	$1024	$1144
Intel SE440BX-2 "Seattle"	MB6921	Intel 440BX	768	3		Intel/Phoenix			4	2	1	ATX	3 Yrs	$120	N/A	N/A	$360	$420	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Shuttle AV64	MB6309	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3		Award		UltraDMA/66	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	$96	$301	$336	$336	$396	$526	$671	N/A	N/A
SuperMicro P6DGU (Dual)	MB6122	Intel 440GX	2048	4		AMI		Adaptec U2W	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	$485	N/A	N/A	$725	$785	N/A	N/A	$965	$1085
SuperMicro P6SBA	MB6120	Intel 440BX	768	3		AMI			4	3	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$103	N/A	N/A	$343	$403	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SuperMicro P6SBU	MB6128	Intel 440BX	1024	4		AMI		Adaptec U2W	4	3	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$343	N/A	N/A	$583	$643	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tyan S1834 Tiger 133 (Dual)	MB6020	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	2048	4		Award		UltraDMA/66	6	1	1	ATX	3 Yrs.	$162	$367	$402	$402	$462	$592	$737	$642	$762

Socket 370

	Part Number	Chip Set	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Integrated Audio	Integrated Video	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	AMR or CNR Slot	Format	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/Intel® Celeron™ 600 128K OD 66MHz FSB	w/Intel Celeron 700 128K OD 66MHz FSB	w/Intel Celeron 733 128K OD 66MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium® III 667 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 733 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 800/EB 256K OD 100/133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 850 256K OD 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 866 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 933 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 1000 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Dual Intel Pentium III 800EB 256K OD - 133MHz FSB
ABIT SE6	MB6512	Intel 815E	768	3	Award	Intel 815E	Intel 815E	6		1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$169	$269	$289	$314	$374	$409	$469	$469	$599	$744	N/A	
ABIT VH6	MB6511	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3	Award	AC-97		5	1	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$113	$213	$233	$258	$318	$353	$353	$413	$413	$543	$688	N/A
ASUS CUBX	MB6726	Intel 440BX	1024	4	Award	AC-97		6	1	1		ATX	1 Yr	$149	$249	$269	$294	N/A	N/A	$389	$449	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ASUS CUSL2	MB6727	Intel 815E	1536	3	Award	Intel 815E	Intel 815E	5	1	1	1	ATX	1 Yr	$174	$274	$294	$319	$379	$414	$414	$474	$604	$749	N/A	
ASUS CUR-DLS (Dual)	MB6728	ServerWorks LE	4096	4	Award		RAGE-XL	7				ATX	1 Yr	$599	$699	$719	$744	$804	$839	$839	$899	$899	$1029	$1174	$1079
ASUS CUV4X	MB6725	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	1536	3	Award	AC-97		5	1	1	1	ATX	1 Yr	$133	$233	$253	$278	$338	$373	$373	$433	$433	$563	$708	N/A
EPoX EP-3VCA2	MB6856	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3	Award	AC-97		5		1	1	ATX	2 Yrs.	$109	$209	$229	$254	$314	$349	$349	$409	$409	$539	$684	N/A
Intel D815EEA "Easton"	MB6922	Intel 815E	512	3	Award	Intel 815E	Intel 815E	5		1	1	ATX	3 Yrs.	$168	$268	$288	$313	$373	$408	$408	$468	$468	$598	$743	N/A
Shuttle AV14	MB6311	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3	Award			5	2	1		ATX	1 Yr.	$99	$199	$219	$244	$304	$339	$339	$399	$399	$529	$674	N/A
Shuttle ME21	MB6312	Intel 815E	512	2	Award	Intel 815E	Intel 815E	3		1	1	Micro ATX	1 Yr.	$144	$244	$264	$289	$349	$384	$384	$444	$444	$574	$719	N/A
Shuttle ME64	MB6310	Intel 810E	512	2	Award	Intel 810E	Intel 810E	3			1	Micro ATX	1 Yr.	$118	$218	$238	$263	$323	$358	$358	$418	$418	$548	$693	N/A
SuperMicro 370SEA	MB6140	Intel 810E	512	2	AMI	Intel 810E	Intel 810E	6	1		1	ATX	1 Yr.	$142	$242	$262	$287	$347	$382	$382	$442	$442	$572	$717	N/A
SuperMicro 370SSA	MB6140	Intel 815E	512	2	AMI	Intel 815E	Intel 815E	6		1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$162	$262	$282	$307	$367	$402	$402	$462	$462	$592	$737	N/A
SuperMicro 370DLE (Dual)	MB6154	ServerWorks LE	2048	2	AMI			6	1			ATX	1 Yr	$342	$442	$462	$487	$547	$582	$582	$642	$642	$772	$917	$822
SuperMicro 370DL3 (Dual)	MB6155	ServerWorks LE	2048	2	AMI			6	1			ATX	1 Yr	$545	$645	$665	$690	$750	$785	$785	$845	$845	$975	$1120	$1025
Tyan S1854 Trinity 400	MB6018	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3	Award			6	1	1		ATX	3 Yrs.	$109	$209	$229	$254	$314	$349	$349	$409	$409	$539	$684	N/A

Slot 2

	Part Number	Chip Set	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Integrated Audio	Integrated Video	Integrated Controller	Integrated Networking	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Format	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/Intel® Pentium III® Xeon™ 550MHz 512K 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Xeon 550MHz 1M 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Xeon 550MHz 2M 100MHz FSB	w/Dual Intel Xeon 550MHz 512K 100MHz FSB	w/Quad Intel Xeon 550MHz 512K 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Xeon 700MHz 1M 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Xeon 700MHz 2M 100MHz FSB	w/Dual Intel Xeon 700MHz 1M 100MHz FSB	w/Quad Intel Xeon 700MHz 1M 100MHz FSB
SuperMicro S2DL3	MB6163	ServerWorks LE	4096	4	AMI			Adaptec Ultra160	Intel 82552	6	1		ATX	1 Yr.	$676	$1776	$3006	$5016	$2876	N/A	$2076	$3026	$3476	N/A
SuperMicro S2QR6	MB6190	ServerWorks HE	16384	16	AMI			Adaptec 2-Ch Ultra160	Intel 82559	8			SWTX	1 Yr.	$2799	$3899	$5129	$7139	$4999	$7199	$4199	$5149	$5599	$8399

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Microsoft Games Division Creative Director Jordan Weisman came to Seattle as part of the FASA Interactive buy-out package, and brought with him *Crimson Skies*, along with the MechWarrior franchise, and years of experience creating games. In the seemingly never-ending parade of Microsoft-based developers, he's at the top of the pile, and still decided to face the Backspace...

Jordan Weisman

How the devil are you?
There is no confirmation that I am the devil, even though my team may be spreading rumors to this effect. The deep red skin color is simply my skin's response to the ever-present hot sun of the great Northwest.

What was the first computer game you ever played?
When I was in grammar school, I played an early version of *Empire* on the Plato system at the University of Illinois. This was a multiplayer ASCII-based Trek-type game that left a lasting impression on me.

What's the worst game you've ever been involved in making?
I was involved with a complete turd of a paper roleplaying game based upon a license of Masters of the Universe from Mattel. Need I say more.

What's the best game you've played recently?
Crimson Skies of course — silly question. If you make me exclude that one, I would go to *Age II*. I have been playing it with my oldest son and having a blast. Boy, don't I just sound like the company hack?

When was the last time a computer game drove you to the brink of madness?
If you mean playing one, it would be *Half-Life*. If you mean making one, it would be every single one I have ever been involved with.

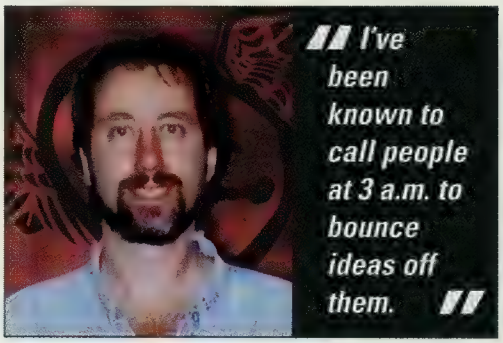
Is* Crimson Skies*' Nathan Zachary your own alter-ego?
Close — but no cigar. I have three sons (in order of oldest to youngest) Zachary, Nathan, and Lucas. Whatever Zach and Nate build — Lucas tears down. See, writing fiction is easy; just steal it from your kids.

Microsoft Games Division is taking over the gaming world. Discuss.
What, and invite the justice department to split the games group? No comment.

If there was one thing about the games business that you could smite with one mighty blow, what would it be?
MBAs. (Warning: huge over-generalization follows!) They won't let you spend the money to make a game unless you can show them how many copies *of the same game* sold last year. Think about that — it explains why you get the same damn games every year.

Violence in gaming: legitimate concern or media hysteria?
I would say violence in society is a completely legitimate concern and one that as a parent scares me, as I am sure it does every other parent. As a kid — long before video games existed (yes I am that old) — I ran around "shooting" my friends playing all sorts of "violent" games. To me, the real problem is access to weapons that turn that "play acting" into real tragedy.

Ed Fries. Discuss.
"You want Fries with that!" Sorry couldn't resist. I believed that [Ed] would allow me to make [*Crimson Skies*] into something beyond the oxymoron that it initially sounds like. He is letting our group take risks and try new things. *Crimson Skies* is a game an MBA would hate; and that was just the start — you should see some of the stuff we are working on for the PC and Xbox.



What do you have in your pockets right now?
$68.73 in U.S. currency, $47.25 in Canadian currency, and a collection of European coins from recent travels. A ray-gun from one of my action figures. Lint. A receipt from a lunch meeting (don't you love charging food on expense reports — whadda country!). And a scrap with some notes that seemed more important before they went through the washing machine.

What's your most unpleasant characteristic?
I tend to get obsessed when conceiving new games and worlds and have been known to call people at 3 a.m. to bounce ideas off them.

Online gaming: over-rated fad or inexorable future?
Inexorable future — for a portion of the audience. I am a huge believer in, and a developer of, online gaming for 13 years now. Starting with the BattleTech centers, which was the first place the public could play networked games at all, to the first version of BattleTech on Genie and of course up to today, I have been very involved in the evolution of online gaming. But it's important to realize that sometimes players just want to become immersed in to the challenges and story of a game in the private way that only a solo game can provide.

From independent game design to the might Microsoft, how has this affected your creative freedom?
I have to admit the leg shackles and "creative process" forms Alpha 101 to Zed 107 do tend to slow the creative juices a little. Just kidding. The truth is that I have been like a kid in a candy store. In my 20 years of running my own game companies (both electronic and paper), we were always resource limited and thus could only develop a small percentage of what we could conceive of. Here at Microsoft, we have access to a virtually unlimited resource pool and thus anything that we can make a strong business case for, we can do.

What game do you really wish somebody would make?
I really focus on games that I want to make. After all, if we can get Microsoft to develop and publish a game that features fantastic planes, fantasy weapons, and photos of women in sexy lingerie, there is nothing stopping us now!

PCG

PC GAMER
NOVEMBER 2000

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"I told you I'd be back," said Hammy to Jeremy. "Now I'm more powerful than you ever imagined! I am ready to take my revenge. You put a deadly mixture of pez and arsenic into my hamster food because you were jealous of my cute looks and my popularity. Now I'm back to avenge myself!"

"Gary always liked you better! He was always playing with you and saying, 'Hammy this, Hammy that.' I was sick of it! You want vengeance? Come show me how powerful you really are!" Jeremy bellowed. The air filled with static and the stench of burnt Cheetos.... [CONTINUED]

www.DailyRadar.com

17 hours of our trip to Mt. Rushmore edited down to 4 thrilling minutes.





DELL™ DIMENSION™ 4100 Series

Dell's Movie Studio

- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 800MHz
- 128MB SDRAM at 133MHz
- 30GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- 17" (16.0" vis) E770 Monitor
- 32MB NVIDIA TNT2 M64 4X AGP Graphics
- 12X Max DVD-ROM Drive
- SB Live! Value Digital
- Altec Lansing® ACS-340™ Speakers with Subwoofer
- V.90 56K Capable® PCI Telephony Modem for Windows®
- IEEE 1394 PCI Card with MGI VideoWave® III Video Editing SW, Dell™ Edition
- MS® Works Suite 2000 ■ MS® Windows® Me[39]
- 3-Yr Limited Warranty[2] ■ 1-Yr At-Home Service[4]

$1599 E-VALUE CODE 89117-500915v

DELL RECOMMENDED UPGRADES:

- Canon® ZR10 Digital Video Camcorder, add $899
- Add 8x/4x/32x CD-RW Drive, add $199

The Dell™ Movie Studio. Movie Making made easy.

With our New Dell™ Movie Studio solution, you'll be editing digital videos, adding soundtracks, selecting still images, and e-mailing your brilliance to the world faster than you can say "that's a wrap." Dell Movie Studio comes pre-tested and factory-loaded on select Dimension™ desktops, featuring powerful Intel® Pentium® III processors. And, of course, it's all backed by Dell's award-winning technical support. Dell Movie Studio. It's just one more way Dell4me™ helps your family get the most out of your PC. For more information go to www.dell4me.com/moviestudio

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Includes Windows Millennium Edition — the home version of the world's favorite software.

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Build your dream machine from start to finish by including any of the features you choose.

With over 30 million potential configurations, you should have enough options to find exactly what you need for your system. And leave out exactly what you don't. Then again, with all of the latest and greatest technology at your fingertips, you may not want to leave out very much at all. Dell™ offers up to 1GHz of processing power on select Dimension™ desktops, or up to 750MHz on Inspiron™ notebooks, allowing you to cruise at any speed you'd like. And maximizing productivity will be a breeze with up to 75GB[5] of hard drive space on Dimension desktops. Find out more about all of this and our award-winning service and support options at www.dell4me.com. And you didn't even have to break a sweat, did you?



Dell™ Inspiron™ 5000e

DELL™ NOTEBOOKS:

DELL™ INSPIRON™ 3800

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- Intel® Celeron™ Processor at 500MHz
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- 32MB 100MHz SDRAM
- 4.8GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Modular 24X Max CD-ROM
- 2X AGP 8MB ATI RAGE Mobility™-M1 3D® Video
- 26.5WHr Li-Ion Battery with ExpressCharge™ Technology
- MS® Works Suite 2000 ■ MS® Windows® Me[39]
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty[2]
- 1-Yr Next-Business-Day On-site Service[4]

$1399 E•VALUE CODE 89118-800913

As low as $38/Mo., for 48 Mos.[17]

DELL™ INSPIRON™ 5000e

Performance and Mobility

- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 700MHz Featuring Intel® SpeedStep™ Technology
- 15" Ultra XGA TFT Display
- 64MB 100MHz SDRAM
- 5GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Modular Removable 8X Max DVD-ROM Drive
- 2X AGP 16MB ATI RAGE Mobility™ 128 3D® Video
- 59WHr Li-Ion Battery
- Internal V.90 56K Capable[6] FaxModem
- MS® Works Suite 2000 ■ MS® Windows® Me[39]
- 3-Yr Limited Warranty[2]
- 3-Yr Next-Business-Day On-site Service[4]

$2749 E•VALUE CODE 89118-800927a

As low as $75/Mo., for 48 Mos.[17]

DELL™ INSPIRON™ 7500

Mobile Desktop

- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 750MHz Featuring Intel® SpeedStep™ Technology
- 15.4" Super XGA TFT Display
- 96MB 100MHz SDRAM
- 20GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Removable Combo 24X Max CD-ROM and Floppy Drive
- 2X AGP 8MB ATI RAGE Mobility™-P 3D® Video
- 79WHr Li-Ion Battery
- Internal V.90 56K Capable[6] FaxModem
- MS® Works Suite 2000 ■ MS® Windows® Me[39]
- 3-Yr Limited Warranty[2]
- 3-Yr Next-Business-Day On-site Service[4]

$3199 E•VALUE CODE 89118-800931a

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Affordable Desktop Solution

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- 7.5GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- 15" (13.8" vis) E551 Monitor
- Intel® 3D® AGP Graphics
- 48X Max CD-ROM Drive
- SoundBlaster 64V PCI LC Sound Card
- PC Speakers
- MS® Works Suite 2000 ■ MS® Windows® Me[39]
- 3-Yr Limited Warranty[2] ■ 1-Yr At-Home Service[4]

$849 E•VALUE CODE 89118-500908a

As low as $23/Mo., for 48 Mos.[17]

DELL™ DIMENSION™ L Series

Affordable Desktop Solution

- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 733MHz
- 64MB SDRAM
- 7.5GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- 15" (13.8" vis) E551 Monitor
- Intel® 3D® AGP Graphics
- 48X Max CD-ROM Drive
- SoundBlaster 64V PCI LC Sound Card
- PC Speakers
- MS® Works Suite 2000 ■ MS® Windows® Me[39]
- 3-Yr Limited Warranty[2] ■ 1-Yr At-Home Service[4]

$899 E•VALUE CODE 89118-500908b

As low as $25/Mo., for 48 Mos.[17]

DELL™ DIMENSION™ 4100 Series

Advanced Performance, Smart Value

- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 866MHz
- 128MB SDRAM at 133MHz
- 20GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- 17" (16.0" vis, .26dp) M781 Monitor
- 32MB NVIDIA TNT2 M64 4X AGP Graphics
- 12X Max DVD-ROM Drive
- SB Live! Value Digital
- Altec Lansing® ACS-340™ Speakers with Subwoofer
- V.90 56K Capable[6] PCI Telephony Modem for Windows®
- MS® Works Suite 2000 ■ MS® Windows® Me[39]
- 3-Yr Limited Warranty[2] ■ 1-Yr At-Home Service[4]

$1599 E•VALUE CODE 89118-500915y

As low as $44/Mo., for 48 Mos.[17]

DELL™ DIMENSION™ XPS B Series

Cutting-Edge Technology

- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 1GHz
- 128MB RDRAM ■ 30GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- 19" (17.9" vis, .24 - .25AG) P991 FD Trinitron® Monitor
- NEW 32MB DDR NVIDIA GeForce2 GTS 4X AGP Graphics Card
- 12X Max DVD-ROM Drive
- SB Live! Value Digital
- Harman Kardon HK-595 Surround Sound Speakers with Subwoofer
- V.90 56K Capable[6] PCI Telephony Modem for Windows®
- MS® Works Suite 2000 ■ MS® Windows® Me[39]
- 3-Yr Limited Warranty[2] ■ 1-Yr At-Home Service[4]

$2499 E•VALUE CODE 89118-500924y

As low as $68/Mo., for 48 Mos.[17]

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- HP® ScanJet® 4300, add $149
- UMAX® Astra® 2100U, add $89

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- Home Reference 4-pack[16], add $79

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